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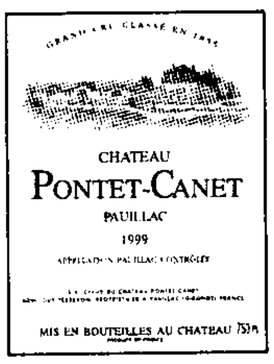

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✔ Léoville Poyferré	189
Léoville-Barton	252
Gruaud Larose	216
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Saint-Pierre	165
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Domaine de Courteillac	57
Plaisance	45
Pomerol	
Le Bon Pasteur	285
✔ Clinet	465
✔ Nenin	354
La Conseillante	489
✔ L'Evangile	738
Franc Maillet	114
Gazin	336
Guillot	120
Mazeyres	111
Petit Village	297
La Pointe	132
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❤ **de Sales**	**114**
✔ Vieux Château Certan *(6 btls)*	267
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✔ Péby Faugères	252
❤ **Puy Mouton**	**96**
✔ Sanctus	234
Le Petit Cheval	252
✔ Virginie de Valandraud	246
Graves Pessac-Léognanc, red	
✔ La Mission Haut-Brion	534
✔ La Tour Haut-Brion	213
❤ **Carbonnieux**	**135**
Domaine de Chevalier	195
Haut-Bailly	195
❤ **Latour-Martillac**	**123**
Malartic-Lagravière	132

CHÂTEAUX	£ per 12 bottle case in bond ex VAT
Pape Clément	267
Smith Haut Lafitte	195
Picque Caillou	81
Domaine de la Solitude	69
Graves Pessac-Léognanc, white	
✔ Laville Haut-Brion	411
✔ Domaine de Chevalier	297
Latour-Martillac	117
Malartic-Lagravière	150
✔ Pape Clément *(6 btls)*	159
Smith Haut Lafitte	189
Domaine de la Solitude	81
Sauternes	
de Rayne Vigneau	144
Suduiraut	183
Coutet	183
✔ Climens	252
✔ Guiraud	180
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✔ Caillou Blanc	114
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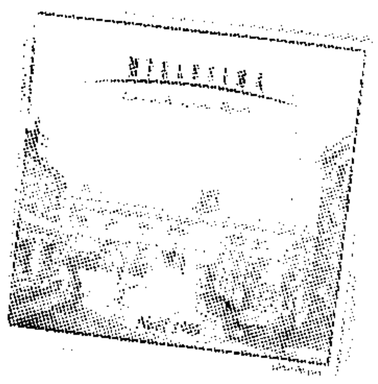

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Gnome

HATS OFF to my son, James Gnome, who is the brilliant new boss of my Chinese satellite station Dirty Digital TV. James has risen through the ranks of Gnome International by virtue of merit and merit alone and has now proved this in his first public statement on the subject of the Media.

He has accused the British Government of being "evil" in its attempts to regulate forward-looking television companies like his father's GnomeFilthSat plc.

Is he not a genuine chip off the old block? To accuse Britain of being "evil" whilst being the boss of a company whose main job is to suck up to a group of mass-murderers in China is surely proof of the old saying, "Blood is thicker than everyone else"!

E. Strobes
pp Lord Gnome
Gnomes International
Tiananmen Square
New York.

"Hold the front page!"

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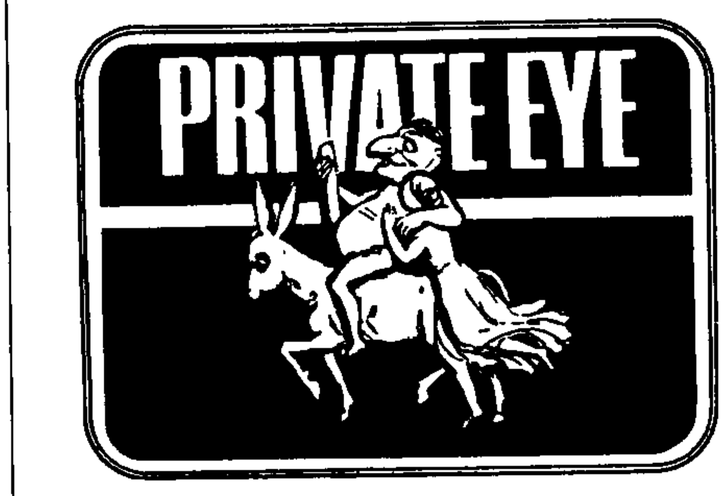
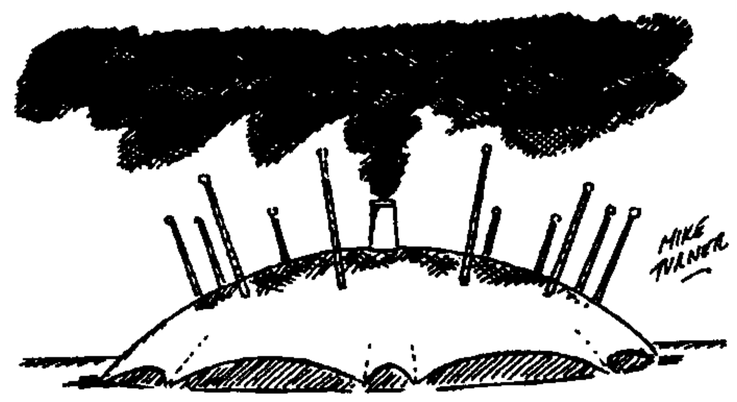


101 Uses For A Dome

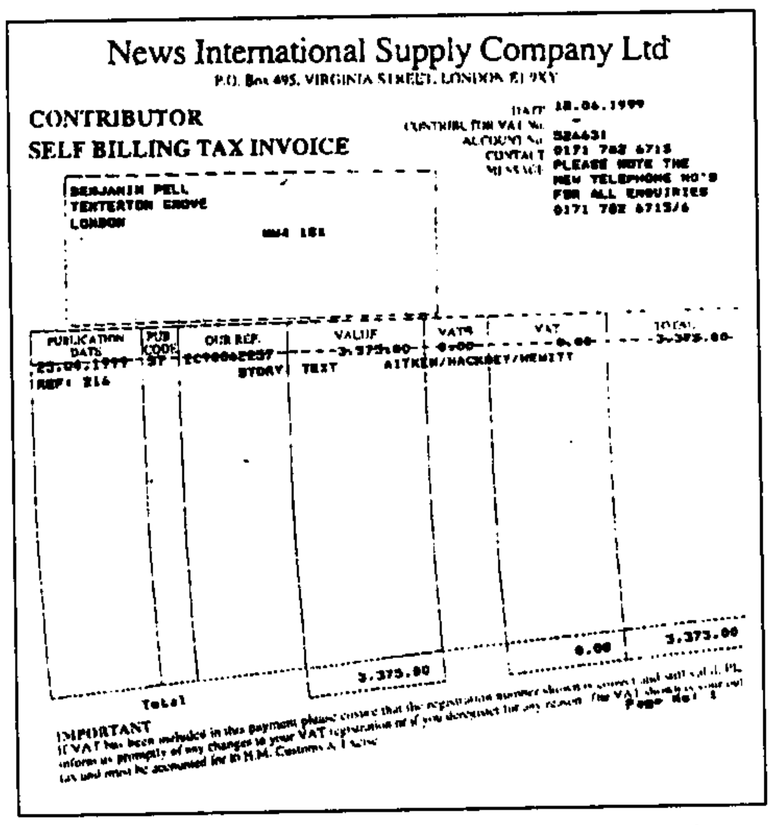


Secret Memo Incinerating Plant

THE DENIZENS of Fleet Street and Westminster have belatedly noticed that Benjamin "the Binman" Pell may have had something to do with the spate of Labour "leaks" — as revealed in the last *Eye*.

As long ago as January Pell was boasting that he had been asked by a national newspaper to "investigate" some of the PM's close associates, and was brandishing a list that included the names of Lord Levy and Philip Gould.

No prizes for guessing which newspaper. David Leppard and his pisspoor Insight team at the *Sunday Times* were under severe pressure from editor John Witherow to come up with some decent political scoops instead of the vague cloak-and-dagger rubbish that is their usual fare. Leppard had often used Pell's services in the past: an invoice obtained by the *Eye* shows that on one Sunday alone last April the Binman earned £3,375 for three stories ("Aitken/Hackney/Hewitt") in the *Sunday Times*.



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Page No. 1

Pell's favourite modus operandi is nicking bin-bags from the West End offices of showbiz solicitors. This is how he found the gen on Blairite fund-raiser Lord Levy, who because of his entertainment background (Alvin Stardust, Chris Rea, etc) uses just such a firm of lawyers.

For Philip Gould, however, it seems Benjy broadened his repertoire by stealing the rubbish from outside a private house. He then took the swag to the *Sunday Times* which duly began publishing Gould's memos. His fee is, as yet, unknown.

Pell is forever grumbling about how little money he makes out of his crimes, which is why he devised the tactic of the "double dip" — supplying the same material to two different clients. Thus he made £10,000 from selling to Mohamed Fayed details of how Neil Hamilton's counsel intended to cross-examine him (yet another Benjy bin-job) — and then, via his fixer Burton Murray, gave the *Mail on Sunday* the story of how he'd done it.

The *Sunday Times* must be well pleased with its stories about Levy and Gould. But there remains one puzzle: what was the source of those other two memos — one from Blair, one from Gould — that appeared simultaneously in the *Sun* and *Times* rather than the *Sunday Times*?

One theory is that the *ST* itself handed over part of its Pell collection of memos to the daily Wapping rags in order to sow confusion about where they'd come from. But it seems implausible that any newspaper would willingly give away such scoops. The operation looks like yet another of Benjy's double dips: flog the documents to the *ST* and then — perhaps in a fit of pique at the miserliness of his fee — leak some of them all over again.

EVERYONE knows that high court judges are appointed by the lord chancellor, but not so many know that lords justice of appeal are appointed personally by the prime minister.

Which is why the announcement on 13 July that Mr Justice Keene has been raised from the ordinary judges' bench to be a much more prestigious lord justice of appeal is so interesting.

David Keene has been a generous and expansive host in his French villa to his close friends the prime minister, Tony Blair, and his wife, Cherie Blair QC, who is often in a position to observe judges and their abilities at close range.

SO mortified was the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) by the guard who failed to recognise Cherie Blair and charged her a penalty fine for travelling without a ticket, it plans to present the PM's wife with a family railcard at the Labour conference in September.

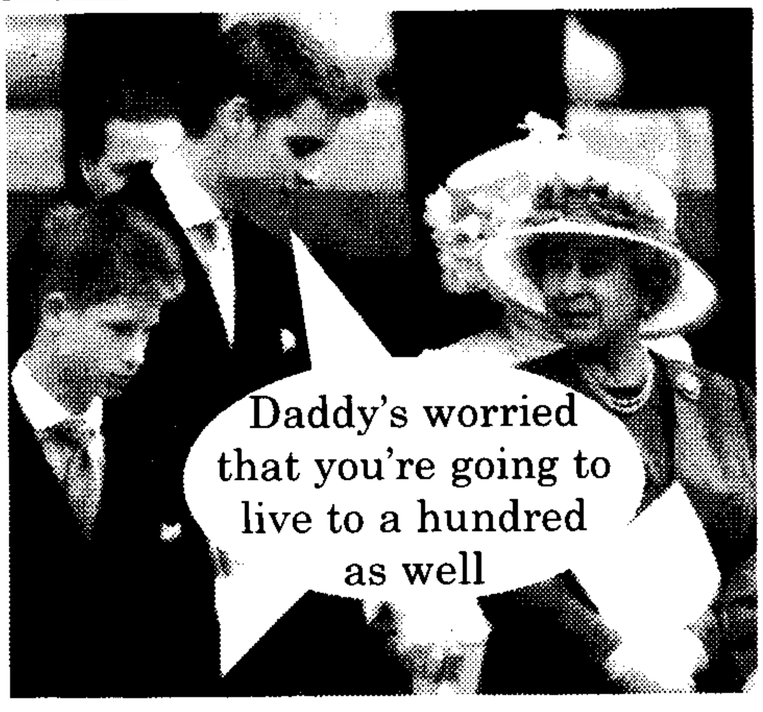
With their combined incomes, however, the Blairs are probably one of the very few families in the country who don't actually need a railcard to pay Branson's ransom for a return trip to Blackpool, £209.60 off peak standard class return for two adults and four children...

THE medium range Trigat, a portable anti-tank rocket, was meant to come into service in December 1995. The latest news is that it is likely to be ready for use in 2005.

By that time, the national audit office reckons, the Trigat will be totally obsolete as tanks by then will be too well-armoured and fast for them to be susceptible to that kind of rocket system. Who sold this junk to the army? Step forward Matra BAe. Perhaps the firm's outstanding success in rocket engineering explains why Ian Duncan Melville, principal weapons system engineer at Matra BAe, got his MBE in 1998.

THE damning report on the Ilusu dam from the select committee for international development is a terrible blow to the two senior members of the government who have publicly supported the scheme — Patricia Hewitt and Robin Cook. But it is even worse news for contractor Balfour Beatty.

The committee recommends that firms involved in corruption scandals should not be eligible for support from the export credits guarantee department (ECGD). Balfour Beatty, defending a nasty corruption case in Lesotho, has enjoyed ECGD support every year since 1994. Last year it got ECGD support under three different names — Balfour Beatty Ltd, Balfour Beatty Projects Engineering and Balfour Beatty International. There's only one other company with the same sort of record: AMEC, whose chief executive Peter Mason is on the ECGD advisory committee.



"There are G8 leaders in Japan who'd be grateful for that meal"

VIEW FROM THE SUMMIT

THE G8 summit meeting in Okinawa, the most expensive in history, is over. And people want to know why the Japanese government spent half a billion pounds talking about reducing the debt of poorer countries instead of using the money to, well... reduce the debt of poorer countries.

In fairness only some of the money was spent on free food and drink for visiting hacks; and hosting a G8 summit on a remote island with little infrastructure does require cash.

For example, £18m was spent on a new building to host the summit. Henceforth it is supposed to be a "conference centre", but it is hard to see who would want to hold conferences there. The building is an hour by road from the nearest international airport and has no rail link. It is surrounded by other failed projects, including government-backed amusement parks and an "International Shopping Centre". The now-derelict summit building will cost nearly a million pounds a year to maintain.

Holding the summit in Okinawa also meant flying hundreds of government bureaucrats on 2,000-mile return trips to set up the event, and then booking entire hotels to accommodate them. Since there is no railway on Okinawa, roads between the capital, Naha, and the summit site had to be improved and new infrastructure put in place. In addition, hotel staff had to go on special training courses; phone and satellite links had to be set up; and the government even paid for Okinawan song-and-dance troupes to visit the other G8 countries to give goodwill performances.

Security costs were especially high because Okinawa is not only remote but a hotbed of radical dissent, with US bases occupying nearly half the island, drawing constant protests from locals. Around 25,000 police were drafted in from the mainland. Security was far tougher – and more expensive – than it would have been if the event had been held in Tokyo.

All in all, there is probably no worse place in Japan to hold a G8 summit than Okinawa. So why was it chosen?

The official reason, according to the Japanese foreign ministry, is that "Okinawa has the facilities and environment needed for the summit" (it hasn't) and that Okinawa "is geographically the closest part of Japan to the rest of Asia and boasts a long history of exchange with the wider region."

The real reason, of course, had to do with domestic politics. In recent years Okinawans have been incensed by a number of high-profile crimes by American servicemen on the island, and they are critical of the central government's continuing support for the US military bases. The ruling Liberal Democratic Party (motto: "Neither liberal nor democratic") decided to throw them a biscuit. The half a billion pounds spent on the island was supposed to alleviate the highest unemployment rate in Japan. And the "pride" in hosting the summit was supposed to make Okinawans feel closer to the mainland.

That's one reason the summit resembled the olympics. Not only were there lavish promotions and parades, logos and song-and-dance troupes, but there was even an official G8 summit theme song called *Never End*. For those in the third world crippled by constant interest payments, the title is appropriate.

NEWS

THE revolving doors between the armed services and arms manufacturers have been swinging once again.

Through them marched Admiral Sir Jock Slater, the former first sea lord, to become a non-executive director of warship builder Vosper Thorneycroft.

Vosper chairman, former Tory cabinet minister Lord Wakeham, said he was absolutely "delighted" that Sir Jock was able to bring "invaluable knowledge and experience of the defence scene" to the company. He was even more delighted when defence secretary Geoff Hoon announced orders worth a billion pounds for warships — to be shared between Vospers and British Aerospace.

On his way through the revolving doors Sir Jock may have spotted Sir Robert Harmon-Joyce, former deputy to the chief of defence procurement and master general of the ordnance. Sir Robert was on his way to take up his new post as a director of arms supplier Alvis. Two months after he left the ministry of defence, the army slapped in an order for a billion pounds worth of battlefield taxis, plus another £60m worth of "all terrain vehicles" for the marines, all from Alvis.

THE monitoring of nuclear power stations to ensure there has been no radioactive leak is a routine activity carried out by the Environment Protection Agency (EPA) but paid for by the nuclear operators. That's the theory anyway.

In Scotland nuclear operators such as British Energy, which recently warned its shareholders it will make a loss this year, have seemingly asked themselves why they should pay the whole bill when taxpayers could contribute.

Inconveniently this way of thinking came to the attention of Liberal Democrat Tavish Scott, a member of the Scottish parliament (MSP), who asked the Scottish Executive for a breakdown of two sets of figures: how much the operators have paid towards inspections; and, secondly, how much the inspections cost the Scottish EPA (SEPA).

Scottish environment minister Sarah Boyack was forced to admit that SEPA is already paying a significant proportion – £123,000 out of the overall cost of £433,000.

AFTER a disastrous flood in Folkestone in August 1996, Southern Water, a subsidiary of Scottish Power, assured residents it would not recur once a £120m initiative for the area was put into action.

One of the main features of this was a pumping station which opened last November. When locals said it would not solve the problem of the town's antiquated sewerage system, Southern Water promised that the scheme would reduce the risk of flooding from the sewers to once in 50 years.

The company soon had to backtrack on this promise though when it emerged that the scheme was based on an outdated computer model of the sewerage system. Southern Water went back to the drawing board and enlisted the help of engineering firm Bullens, which drew up three reports on the problem.

Flood victims have demanded to see these, but Southern Water refuses. It argues that the reports include a list of 700 households in Kent, Sussex and Hampshire which are at risk from flooding but, since not all householders are aware they are at risk, to inform them would be scare-mongering.

Residents are urging the water regulator Ofwat and local MP Michael Howard to press the company for disclosure. On 12 July Howard received a letter from Southern Water, saying the matter would be considered at the next board meeting. Meanwhile those who live in the worst affected areas must endure high insurance premiums, sandbags, the stench of sewage in their back gardens when it rains... and the constant fear of worse damage to come.

JULY 1999: *Revenews*, the Inland Revenue's internal magazine, celebrates reaching the half-way point in its 10-year "partnership" with giant computer firm EDS.

The revenue's director general Tim Flesher proudly announces: "The achievements which stand out above all others include the delivery of Self Assessment on schedule and the world pace record of the i2K roll out" (ie the implementation of computerised pay-as-you-earn, or COP).

JULY 2000: The Inland Revenue admits that during transfer to the EDS COP system 1998/99 pay and tax details have gone missing from 5.2 million taxpayer records. This follows the shutdown of the EDS-run tax self assessment system for six weeks from the start of the tax year in April.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

RAILTRACK today blamed wet weather and a rise in the number of suicides for a five percent increase in delays to trains. The company's chief executive, Gerald Corbett, said heads should roll...

— *Edinburgh Evening News*, 13 July

LATEST in the long line of new Labour businessmen to fall on hard times is Alan Crane.

A couple of months ago he chaired the Leamington Spa building firm Christiani & Nielsen and was an obvious choice to oversee new Labour's Movement for Innovation, or M41 as it is pretentiously known.

M41 had a mission statement: a "vision of creating self-sustaining continuous improvement, leading to world class performance and increased profitability" by promoting best practice for the building industry.

Further proof of the cordial relations between the government and Crane was the "secondment" of a key Christiani & Nielsen employee to the department of the environment, transport and the regions (DETR) — an appointment followed by a £30m road building contract back to the firm from the DETR.

Then all those missions and visions were put to the test at Christiani & Nielsen, which made a £10m loss last year. Chairman Crane had to step down, but he is still going strong at M41.

EDUCASHUN

The Government's pay reforms are the best opportunity teachers have had for a generation to radically improve their pay. All the Government has asked is that teachers do a good job in return. Clearly the NUT are unable to except this principle.

— Department for Education and Employment statement on high court ruling on teachers' pay, 14 July

SCOTTISH quangocrat Sir Fraser Morrison still maintains strong links with Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) despite stepping down as chairman two years ago.

Five years ago questions were raised about the contract to build the new HQ of the North of Scotland Water Authority. Edinburgh-based construction firm Morrison Group, chairman one Sir Fraser Morrison, had entered a bid for the project before it was even put out to tender, and subsequently won the contract.

Since then Morrison Group has won contracts worth £12.7m from HIE, including building the controversial new Cairn Gorm funicular railway. Now the bond between the building firm and the enterprise body is about to be strengthened further. HIE chief executive Iain Robertson has announced that he will be quitting his post in October to take up a place on the board of, er, Morrison Group.

IN A recent speech to the European Leisure Software Publishers' Association (ELSPA), culture minister Janet Anderson made great play of British success stories in the video games industry such as Eidos, creator of the Tomb Raider games starring ubiquitous cyber-babe Lara Croft.

Anderson told ELSPA that "domestic investment is vital if Britain is to retain the economic benefit of the creative expertise in this field". Alas, no one appears to have told her that Eidos is currently in takeover talks with French firm Infogrames.

32 Sc5 Midgets are reportedly putting tourists off coming to Scotland. Also: Sc15(33).

Press Summary 'Scotland 2000'

NOOKS and CORNERS

DO THE owners of tiresome listed buildings who would rather assist the great national plan to build four million new homes than obey the law read this column? If they do, I fear they will be heartened by the following dreadful story. Mind you, they probably already have their own grapevine by which they will learn the encouraging news that John Prescott, secretary of state for the environment, transport and the regions, has granted consent for the demolition of Sandown Hall in Liverpool.

Sandown Hall was built on Olive Mount in Wavertree in about 1810 for William Earle, a coal merchant. Later it was the home of Hugh Hornby, mayor of Liverpool, and after 1930 the house was used by Crawfords Biscuits as a sport and social club. Listed at grade II, it is one of only six Georgian mansions surviving in the Liverpool area: Pevsner called it "a handsome job".

In 1990 Sandown Hall was bought for £700,000 by George Downey, who promptly sold off most of the surrounding estate for new housing. In 1994, Mr Downey, together with his business partners, Len Noble and Paula Appleton, applied for listed building consent to demolish Sandown Hall. True to form, and against the advice of its planning officer, the development control sub-committee of the Labour-controlled council in the tragic, benighted city of Liverpool, voted in favour of demolition on the grounds that a "nursing village" development on the site would create jobs.

As this was opposed by English Heritage, as well as the Wavertree Society and the Georgian Group, a public inquiry was held in 1996. The secretary of state subsequently endorsed his inspector's recommendation that consent be refused as "to allow demolition on cost and viability grounds alone could... suggest acquiescence with owners who, for whatever reasons, have allowed a building to fall into such a dilapidated state".

Sandown Hall was in good condition when bought by Mr Downey, who informed the Wavertree Society in 1994 that he was withdrawing "round-the-clock" security, adding, with uncanny percipience, that "no doubt the Hall will then be vandalised".

In the summer of 1995 Sandown Hall was damaged by "some force... applied to the south wall which caused serious structural instability". And by the time Mr Downey and his partners submitted a second application for listed building consent for demolition in 1997, the once-elegant mansion had — surprise, surprise — been severely damaged by a fire (described by the *Liverpool Echo* as "a professional job", although no prosecution resulted).

Oh dear. Yet again Liverpool city council acquiesced, the planning officer advising that "the current owners were instrumental in the building's demise but the proper way to demonstrate that such action does not pay is to pursue a criminal prosecution [for neglect of the building] rather than to withhold approval to demolish, which would disregard the building's current condition and economic realities".

After another public inquiry, the inspector's report was issued on 30 November 1998, but only now has the secretary of state announced his decision — no doubt because the departments of environment and culture have been arguing over the money which would have to be found if Sandown Hall were to be saved (though the sums are trivial compared with keeping the ****ing dome open for a day). Mr Prescott has now informed Mr Downey's solicitors that "the view is taken that the Hall may have been saved and a new use found for it had your clients shown greater commitment to the future of the Hall and the City Council shown greater vigilance and commitment to use the powers available to them to at least protect [it] to prevent its deterioration".

Even so, he has now granted listed building consent for demolition as "there appears to be no realistic prospect of restoring the building without the use by the Secretary of State... of his reserve powers under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990... [but] there is no prospect of those reserve powers being used in this instance". Why not? And why has no criminal prosecution of the neglectful owners been pursued? It seems the way to get a listed building down under New Labour is just the same as under Old Labour.

In conclusion, it seems best to quote the redoubtable Florence Gersten of the Save Our City Campaign: "...the decision regarding the fate of Sandown Hall will send out a clear signal... The green light has now been given. Every greedy, corrupt owner of a listed building who hears about Sandown Hall will see it as a fine precedent. He will know that he can do whatever he likes with his listed property, without incurring any penalty".

NOT THAT Georgian artefacts are any safer under the Tories. Until recently, outside No 7 St James's Square, was the original 18th century mounting block — one of those redundant objects that adds to the pleasure of urban life and gives a sense of history. Now this harmless, poignant piece of old stone has gone — smashed by outside contractors hired by Tory Westminster city council to carry out its statutory duties.

'Piloti'

MUSEUM NEWS

HAVE the Victoria & Albert Museum trustees who are choosing a successor to director Alan Borg been reading *Private Eye* over the last few years? Let's hope so. For their final shortlist of three is said to include our old chum Timothy "Tim O'Shanter" Clifford, director of the National Galleries of Scotland (NGS).

Clifford applied for the V&A job when it was last vacant five years ago. But he sabotaged his chances then by claiming on television that Sir Paul Getty was stumping up £1m to keep Canova's *Three Graces* in Britain merely to annoy the Getty Museum in California and spite his late father. Getty was so infuriated he threatened to withdraw his £1m and Clifford had to issue grovelling public apologies.

The V&A trustees decided that a man with such a talent for offending rich benefactors might not be an ideal museum director. But they seem to accept his word that he's a good boy now. If they've been following his exploits, they must know his time in Scotland has not been without incident.

We reported, for example, how in May 1996 he sold his private collection of Renaissance and Baroque medals in clear breach of the Museums Association's ethics code, which states that "museum professionals must not deal (buy or sell for profit) in material covered by [their] institution's collecting policy."

Under Clifford the NGS had acquired more than 100 medals and plaquettes, which it didn't collect at all before his arrival. In 1994 he staged "The Currency of Fame" exhibition of Renaissance medals. At least in part thanks to his endeavours at the gallery, the market was buoyant by the time he sold his own stash a couple of years later for £180,000.

In 1998 Clifford lent a large number of artworks from the NGS to Lord Irvine of Lairg for a period of three years. This ignored the advice of his head of conservation, who had pointed out that works on paper are usually shown for only three months or so to avoid damage from light. "I am the director and I make decisions... I am an expert on graphic material," Tim explained tetchily. Alas! It was revealed that, despite his expertise, no fewer than 1,000 Italian drawings in his care at the NGS — including Leonardos and Raphaels — had been found in boxes covered in mould and affected by damp.

The *Eye* reported how in 1998 Tim was rebuked by trustees for "unprofessional conduct" in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery where he had appointed a young woman as "deputy keeper" without advertising the job or interviewing anyone for it — in clear breach of civil service procedures. The trustees concluded that Tim's behaviour was "less than is to be expected of a senior administrative officer" – but that's all water under the bridge now, isn't it?

TUC NEWS

ROGER LYONS, general secretary of the Manufacturing, Science and Finance Union (MSF), seems to remain unbowed even though the union has recently spent £750,000 of members' money in out-of-court settlements, legal costs and pay-offs to staff in a bid to defend his tarnished reputation.

During the recent Labour party policy forum in Exeter, Lyons was becoming noticeably tired and emotional at a dinner hosted by Irwin Mitchell, the law firm which represents the MSF, when he demanded that a waiter bring more booze for himself and his seated chums, who included deputy prime minister John Prescott.

Unfortunately for Lyons and his companions the waiter refused because the tab behind the bar had already been exceeded by the thirsty friends. Quick as a flash the inebriated workers' champion pulled out an MSF credit card — only to be foiled by an even quicker lawyer who confiscated the plastic before admonishing an embarrassed Lyons for expecting MSF members to support his extravagant lifestyle.

Meanwhile it looks as if MSF funds are to be further strained, courtesy of another damaging industrial tribunal, which could yet be the final nail in the coffin of Lyons' union career. Bryan Keegan, Lyons' former chauffeur, alleges that he was expected to ferry the general secretary's family on trips that were distinctly non-union oriented. Keegan claims, among other things, that he was expected to take Lyons' daughter to work, deliver cases of booze, paid for by the MSF, to Lyons' home and take his boss to see Arsenal play away at Hillsborough.

Not that Lyons is taking his current aggravation lying down. Before his former personal assistant Marcia Solomons had her case settled out of court, the bullying union leader had threatened her with a private prosecution for perjury. Had there been the remotest chance of her being found guilty, Solomons could have faced a jail term.

Meanwhile Lyons has threatened Solomons' union, the GMB, with legal action and is now threatening the *Guardian* with the same. Bizarrely he is convinced that *Gruaniad* hack David Hencke has an ancient grudge to settle — and is doing so by filing factual reports from the courts. Lyons tells anyone who will listen that Hencke bought Lyons' Holloway house 20 odd years ago and "won't let up on me because he thinks I sold him a dud house".

'Blackleg'

Street Of Shame

JASON FRASER, the British photographer who gets so upset when anyone suggests that he is a member of the paparazzi and makes his living invading other people's privacy, appears somewhat sensitive about his own photographic image.

He is on the brink of suing the *Daily Express* for breach of copyright after it dared to accompany a recent story about him with... a flattering portrait!

Apparently the picture department of the *Daily Telegraph*, which supplied the photo, failed to realise its use was supposed to be restricted. When the error was spotted between editions, the *Express* dropped the image. But Fraser is still considering a lawsuit.

What is mystifying is that the photo shows the snapper in a very flattering light — baring his teeth in a cheeky grin — quite unlike, say, the hippo-like shots of pregnant pop star Madonna wallowing in a Sicilian mud lake which Fraser was selling round Fleet Street last week. (Hats off to all those editors who promised never to buy paparazzi pictures again!)

Those images certainly appeared at odds with Jase's professed mission statement — "I'm just taking pictures of people in as flattering a light as possible". For as the "Voice of the Mirror" put it when it ran the pictures: "Today we present Madonna as never before seen — covered in mud. It may be good for the skin. Even good for the soul. But it certainly does nothing for the image."

But, as our readers can see, this charming picture of Jason shows a man who could surely not be such a humbug as to complain about an unauthorised photograph in a newspaper?

REBEKAH WADE's clean'n'cuddly new *News of the World* looks, to the untrained eye, remarkably like the sleazy old *News of the Screws*, as *NoW* hacks Louise Oswald and Brian Roberts proved when they turned up in Marbella last week to follow up the *Screws'* revelation that George Best was back on the booze.

Armed only with a large chequebook, the dismal duo booked into the same hotel in Puerto Banus as Best — as did the *Mail*, the *Express* and the *Sun*. Also in attendance were several locally-based freelances and paparazzo agencies who had been retained by Fleet Street newdesks to bump into Best every morning as he stepped out to buy more milk and mineral water. Being honourable men (*sic*), not one of them tipped off Britain's most famous alcoholic that the fellow-guests at his hotel included two hacks from the paper that had originally stitched him up.

At the same time *EastEnders* star Michael Greco was also on holiday in Puerto Banus with some of his mates. The local freelancers knew about this; the *Screws* didn't. But when they spotted Greco out on the town, Oswald and Roberts rushed up to give him a "friendly" warning that the reptiles were after him — helpfully pointing out who and where the "pack" were. Greco then threatened to beat up freelance photographer John Snowdon.

As Rebekah Wade will soon discover, it is a bad idea to alienate freelancers. As one points out: "Wade's celebrity fiancé has been 'on the loose in Puerto Banus' already this year. We all backed off out of deference that now turns out to be misguided. But the next time we find out Ross Kemp is in town, there will be an army of us giving him a you-been-shagging, need-some-gear, in-yer-face, super-reverse-ferret monstering." Charming.

MEANWHILE, Wade has delayed too long in striking against the old guard. She fired columnists Richard Stott and Bill Hagerty, but, sadly for Wade, she moved against "Stotty" shortly after the former *Mirror* and *Today* editor had signed a 10-year contract for a reputed yearly pay-out of £100,000.

He is laughing all the way to the bank as Wade has hired a suitably Blairite columnist to replace him, thus proving that all those evenings spent at "new" Labour fundraising dinners with boyfriend actor Grant Mitchell had not been in vain. She has alighted on Sion Simon, the associate editor of the *Spectator* and *Telegraph* columnist to boot — although Conrad Black is likely to take a dim view of Simon's moonlighting for Murdoch.

IN THE *Observer* magazine two weeks ago, supermodel-turned-thespian Amber Valetta decried the exploitation of her nude image by unscrupulous media types. In a lengthy feature about the pressure on young actresses to bare all, Valetta complained that "there are runway [catwalk] photos where you can see my breasts like it was broad daylight."

And lo, in a fashion spread a mere 21 pages later, there's a photo from a Chloe fashion show duly revealing Amber's breasts in all their pert glory. Will she be taking it up with the press complaints commission?

IMPARTIAL OBSERVER?

AT LAST the *Observer* has found a cause worth fighting for. "For three months we have been investigating the fall-out of family breakdown," it announced on 2 July, introducing a three-week series. "We found a shocking culture producing misery on a vast scale for children and parents."

The hackette who conducted this investigation into the "lottery" of divorce and child custody was one Dina Rabinovitch, who included a small personal revelation in her first two-page feature: "I began taking an interest in family law following my own and friends' divorces, witnessing the reckless decisions I saw being taken about families' lives." No further detail was given of her own experience, but it was noticeable that she slagged off almost everyone involved in the family courts — except the hungry solicitors. Why should this be?

In 1997 Dina Rabinovitch and her husband Guido Rauch, a wealthy derivatives trader, hired Princess Diana's solicitor Anthony Julius to act on behalf of her father, Nahum Rabinovitch, an ultra-Orthodox rabbi in Jerusalem who thought he had been libelled in a book published in London about the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin.

In March 1997 Dina accompanied Anthony Julius to Israel to collect witness statements. As soon as they returned Julius told his wife of 21 years that he was leaving her — and their four children, all aged under 16 — so he could marry the lovely Dina. (Only a year earlier, Julius had boasted to an interviewer that the secret of his success was having an ideal marriage: "If you want to do things in the world, an uncomplicated and wholly supportive family is the perfect base.") Meanwhile Dina, who had three children, broke the news to Guido Rauch.

Since she is a strictly Orthodox Jew who wouldn't be allowed to marry someone with whom she had committed adultery, Julius then had to appear before the Jewish courts and convince them that no hanky-panky had occurred between himself and Rabinovitch. Having cleared this hurdle, the couple were finally married on 31 January 1999.

What caused most amazement in legal circles was the discovery that Dina had been granted legal aid for the divorce. Several lawyers wondered why taxpayers should have to shell out tens of thousands of pounds so that she could end her marriage to one rich man and plight her troth to another. (Julius's earnings at the time were believed to be about £300,000 a year.)

"There can be no more compelling indictment of the legal aid system as it presently stands," the London *Evening Standard* thundered. "To the public, it will seem extraordinary that all the parties to this issue are shameless about their roles — and that the law allows Ms Rabinovitch access to our money."

Now, without so much as a blush, Rabinovitch produces her own "compelling indictment" of family breakdowns in the *Observer*. "So much of what goes on in the family courts is a secret," she complains. "Family hearings are most often held in private and not reported... It means that much of what goes on is not investigated, or indeed challenged." How odd, then, that she missed the opportunity to defy this secrecy by telling us of her own adventures in the family division.

Another *Observer* hackette, Barbara Ellen, has no such inhibitions. On 9 July she treated readers to a lengthy diatribe against dads — and one dad in particular. "I'm currently immersed in legal negotiations with the now-estranged father of my child," she revealed. "In the process of sorting out property equity and child maintenance, he has behaved, to borrow the complex legal vernacular employed by my lawyer, 'like a total shit'."

Unlike Barbara Ellen, of course, who merely uses a national newspaper to trash the reputation of her ex and alienate a small girl from her father. Could this be what the *Observer* means by "a shocking culture producing misery on a vast scale for children and parents"?

FULL points for tact in covering the Sarah Payne story go to the *Sun*. Opposite a full page story about Sarah on 15 July, including details of the police search for a white transit van in connection with her abduction, the Murdoch rag continued its regular feature "White van man", where a van-driving punter gives his views on world affairs.

A few days later, after the harrowing discovery of Sarah's body, the *Sun* offered a £50,000 reward to "nail the bastard". If the sentiment is genuine the *Sun* should consider having a word with its mates elsewhere in the Dirty Digger's stable. On the same night, 18 July, the Sky Cinema channel showed *Pretty Baby*, a film about a 12-year-old girl who is sold into prostitution.

JOHN CRACE in the *Guardian* writes about tabloid coverage of Sarah Payne's murder.

"Both [the *Sun* and the *Mirror*] also gave rather more details about the death than most people would have found decent. The murder was unbearable enough without being told that 'part of the body was unconcealed indicating that the killer might have been disturbed while burying or that the remains were disturbed by a wild animal'."

Obviously the details were not so unbearable that decent people at the *Guardian* didn't want to reprint them all for the benefit of their readers whilst of course dressing them up as "media analysis".

WEB UPDATE

HOW BETTER to celebrate the bust-ups and bigotry of the loyalist marching season than by visiting the Orange Order website?

"The brotherly bond which unites the members is based on a spirit of *tolerance*," it advises potential recruits, "tolerance towards those within the brotherhood with whom there may be differences of emphasis and towards those outside the brotherhood who differ from us in religious persuasion... If you display a tolerant spirit towards those with whom you may disagree, then you will be welcome within the Orange institution."

Who would have guessed it? Er, probably nobody: As the website sadly reveals, "There have been 0000 visitors to this site since 22 September 1997."

PR SOUL

***EYE* readers will recall the gracious humility with which corporate PR person Alison Palmer took over UK media relations for the Orange mobile phone network earlier this year.**

As we reported in *Eye* 1002, she told *PR Week* at the time: "I see Orange as a reflection of me, of what I really love to do; being dynamic, on the front-line, being first, first with everything, the whole glamour bit..."

So it is sad to report that Ms Palmer and Orange have parted company, not entirely happily, after just six weeks. All so very different to those heady days when she told the trade journal: "I see Orange as a reflection of me. Orange wants to be known as glamorous, to be famous globally. It's a vision I share." Not any more.

GREAT INTERVIEWS NO. 94

DENIS HEALEY was the defence secretary in the late 1960s when the British government illegally removed many hundreds of tropical islanders from their homes so that an American military base cold be built on Diego Garcia. Now that the islanders have started a high court action, *Independent* reporter Robert Lemkin decided to ring Lord Healey for a comment.

Healey's first reaction was none too promising: "Where is Diego Garcia?" After reminding him, Lemkin pressed on.

RL: As secretary of state for defence from 1964 to 1970 do you remember the negotiations for the military base?

DH: I'm just a clapped out old fart and if you print that I'll sue you. But I don't begrudge you making a little bit of money from it...

RL: In the documents British officials call their plan the complete sterilisation of the islands.

DH: But there was hardly anyone living there so it didn't matter.

RL: You say there was nobody living there but actually the islanders are bringing a court case on Monday that they were unlawfully evicted from their homes.

DH: I didn't know that. If there's a court case I mustn't comment.

RL: But the documents show the government knew they were ignoring rights of islanders...

DH: I didn't know we had a charter responsibility. There were only a few hundred.

RL: Actually it was around 1,500 to 2,000.

DH: Yes, so we are talking only of hundreds not thousands.

RL: Don't you think with hindsight this was a reprehensible way to behave?

DH: I can't remember details well enough to say... Other issues were more important at the time – the security of the West, cooperation between America and Britain, the protection of the Indian Ocean.

RL: But does that give you the right to ignore the inalienable right of people to live in their home?

DH: You are a beautiful person and I think I've said enough. I told my secretary I didn't want to speak to you.

Cemetery faces grave problems over space

Basingstoke Observer

HACKWATCH

Mirror Images

IT'S a match made in heaven – or, perhaps, in one of Jeffrey Archer's more ludicrously schematic novels. Two boyish public-school types, neither of them socialists, find themselves in charge of Britain's most enduring left-wing institutions, the Labour party and the *Daily Mirror*.

On the morning after the 1997 general election, Piers Morgan's *Mirror* warned Tony Blair's Labour government that "there may be times when we disagree". A year later, to prove that he meant it, Moron ran a front-page attack on the health secretary over NHS waiting lists: "Embarrassed, Mr Dobson? You should be bloody well ASHAMED."

He then recruited the "off-message" Paul Routledge as chief political correspondent and fired a broadside against Alastair Campbell ("Achtung, Alastair!"). As Morgan explained to the *Guardian* at the time, "for the first year in office, the *Mirror* has been pro-New Labour and pro-Tony. Now we think it's time to step back, to avoid being complacent and irrelevant. We'll let the *Sun* go on being slavish and see where it gets them."

But then came the City Slickers scandal. With his job hanging by a gossamer thread, Moron needed all the friends he could get. And on 7 February this year Alastair Campbell was seen lunching at the Gay Hussar restaurant with *Mirror* chairman Sir Victor Blank. "I cannot say the subject of Piers Morgan did not arise," Blank admitted afterwards, adding that although he took "no instructions" from No 10, "perhaps I admit to a gentle nudge".

Still, it would be absurd to think that Moron has tried to save his skin by becoming, er, slavish. As a glance at the recent cuttings will confirm, the *Mirror* remains fiercely independent...

9 June: Others may have enjoyed the prime minister's humiliation by the Women's Institute, but not the *Mirror*. "The truth is that he was the victim of a crude, pre-meditated attack by a bunch of ludicrous middle-aged women," it rages. "His speech remains a very good one." One of the hecklers turns out to be the daughter of a woman who once voted National Front — conclusive proof, the *Mirror* believes, that the only person in Britain who disapproves of Tony is "a pathetic little bigot".

15 June: Just for once, Blair has got the better of William Hague at prime minister's questions. The *Mirror* takes the opportunity to "remind the British electorate of two rather important facts. Tony Blair is a very good prime minister doing a very good job running this country". And yet, despite Alastair Campbell's heroic efforts, most newspapers have failed to grasp these facts. "Is it any wonder Mr Campbell sometimes despairs of his former profession?"

23 June: Roy Jenkins says that Tony Blair is now unlikely to get an honorary Oxford degree. "Big deal," the *Mirror* sneers. "The very existence of honorary degrees exemplifies the revolting elitism which appals both Mr Blair and Chancellor Gordon Brown. The brave new world they are trying to forge has no place for the snobbery which has held Britain back for decades."

28 June: A *Mirror* poll shows that most people are dissatisfied with Tony Blair's performance. How ungrateful can you get! As the paper points out, "the truth is that we SHOULD be satisfied... Most of us are grateful for the brilliant work done by Mr Blair and his colleagues".

3 July: "What really hurts Tony Blair about the attacks on government is that so many come from people they considered to be friends," the *Mirror* grumbles, following Ken Follett's attack on the spin-merchants. To redress the balance, Piers Morgan runs an "exclusive" article by Alastair Campbell revealing that Follett is a whinger who should be ignored.

6 July: The *Mirror* is incensed by the *Sunday Times*'s impertinence in questioning Lord Levy's tax arrangements. It denounces the *ST* for trying to "embarrass one of the Prime Minister's allies" — something which no responsible newspaper should ever do.

8 July: Labour's policy forum is meeting to decide what should be in the next election manifesto, and the *Mirror* can't contain its excitement. "This weekend," it reveals, "is Tony Blair's chance to lay the foundations of a brilliant second term in power."

12 July: "Cherie Blair has got back her sleek figure — just 52 days after giving birth to fourth child Leo," the *Mirror* drools. "There wasn't a hint of post-natal tummy yesterday when the Prime Minister's wife stepped out in an off-white dress and matching long-line jacket which skimmed over her shapely legs." A Downing Street spokeswoman confirms that Cherie "looks very good at the moment", helpfully reminding the paper that Leo is "lovely" too.

13 July: A press conference by the PM has the *Mirror* hyperventilating. "BLAIR'S BIG COMEBACK: TONY TRIUMPHS TO TAKE CONTROL" announces the headline on its "news" story. Not to be outdone, an editorial on page 6 is headed: "BOOST FOR BLAIR... AND FOR BRITAIN."

14 July: "It's been a great two days for Tony Blair," the *Mirror* raves, at a time when every other paper is ridiculing the government's annual report. "And there's better to come. Because the much-heralded documentary on Mr Blair's press secretary Alastair Campbell nails the lie that this government is merely spin, not substance." After many more paragraphs praising the "intelligent, articulate" press secretary, the *Mirror* makes a startling suggestion: if Blair fell under a bus, "in Alastair Campbell he has an equally able right-hand man who'd quite easily take over where his boss left off."

17 July: Only nine days ago a careless *Mirror* leader-writer suggested that our health service "is now close to being the worst in the world". Whoops! Today's *Mirror* has a two-page paean of praise to Labour's health policy ("Forget the Carping, We've So Much To Be Proud Of"), complete with a personal endorsement from the prime minister himself: "I'm delighted the *Mirror* is focusing today on what's so good in the NHS." As, presumably, is former *Mirror*man Alastair Campbell.

18 July: A leaked memo from Tony Blair admits that he's in deep doo-doo and needs some "eye-catching" stunts with which he can be personally associated. The *Mirror* refuses to sully itself with such filth. "There is a traitor in Downing Street," it thunders. "There can be no complaints about Tony Blair writing the memo or what he said in it. What is shocking is that someone close to the prime minister has leaked it... Tony Blair has a tough enough job without being undermined like this."

19 July: Piers Morgan is so thrilled by the comprehensive spending review that he nearly has a seizure. "Stunning... huge... astonishing," an editorial gasps. "Gordon Brown has not pulled this off alone. He will have worked closely with prime minister Tony Blair on this review. They are, despite all the malicious gossip, a terrific team."

20 July: Further embarrassment for "new" Labour, as yet another leaked memo from Philip Gould warns Blair that the government is "out of touch" and "badly contaminated". The *Mirror* hastens to the rescue. "Amazing, isn't it? Any normal boss who analysed his performance regularly to deal with problems effectively would be applauded. But when Tony Blair does it, he is accused of being weak. The fuss over the leaked memos is utterly ridiculous."

Ridiculous is the word.

"We've got a wide variety of destinations"

SIGNAL FAILURES

Prism Rail's fairytale ending

ONCE upon a time a group of third-rate bus managers and a rail-privatisation adviser to the Tories (see *Eye* 907) cobbled together a company called Prism Rail to bid for train franchises.

Their first wish was to have two bouncing, well-subsidised franchises, and the fairy godmothers at the Office of passenger rail franchising (Opraf) duly handed over LTS Rail (aka the Fenchurch Street to Southend misery line) and West Anglia Great Northern, covering Cambridge, Peterborough and the lucrative Stansted Express.

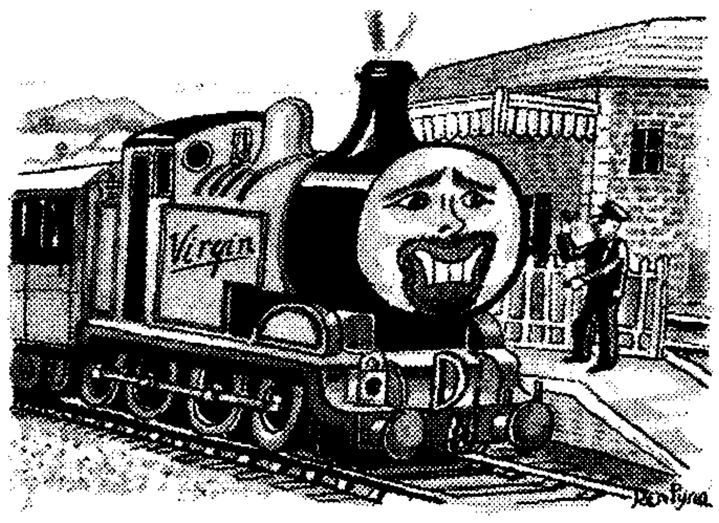
But greedy Prism soon wanted more. In its desperation to outbid rivals, it asked to run Wales & West and Cardiff Railway and said it could do so with ridiculously low subsidies. Again the wish was granted. The stupidity of the bids was obvious to all (*Eye* 928) — all except Opraf which called them "excellent deals" for passengers.

Time went by and Prism's provincial losses rose to £18m a year, with more subsidy cuts to come. This spring Prism's directors planned to jump ship by selling to a bigger group, but the price would have been depressed by the future losses. If only the unprofitable franchises could be cut loose...

Hey presto! The Opraf fairy godmothers, by now at the strategic rail authority, granted Prism its third wish last month, bringing forward by three years the end of the loss-making franchises while leaving Prism with LTS Rail until 2011 and the lucrative Stansted Express till 2004. Prism's share price rocketed immediately and within weeks National Express offered £166m for the asset-less company — a price much inflated by the deal.

So National Express gets its hands on Stansted Express (to add to Gatwick Express and its stake in Heathrow Express), plus the fat LTS Rail subsidy; the Opraf fairies save face — and Prism's bungling directors live happily ever after on the contents of their bulging wallets.

Richard the Tank Engine



"You're half an hour late!"

● VIRGIN Trains' frustration with Railtrack and its engineering contractors indicates how much Railtrack has improved (*sic*) since its early days.

In 1995 the *Eye* (888) reported "an astonishing number of faults" had arisen from Railtrack's hurried subcontracting of maintenance to private firms. Now Virgin's threat to sue Railtrack for £10m shows that cack-handed contractors are *still* cutting signal cables, failing to organise themselves and taking longer to do jobs than the agreed period of "possession" (closure of tracks for maintenance).

As well as inconveniencing passengers, Railtrack's poor management of contractors has safety implications (*Eyes passim* since 1995). Maintenance work in Liverpool last year was such a dog's dinner that a worker was killed, forcing the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) to prosecute. But neither Railtrack nor contractor Jarvis stood in the dock this month, as the HSE tried to pin the blame on two workers. The case was thrown out.

Where the HSE *has* prosecuted Railtrack or a contractor it has normally succeeded; but each conviction is a mere slap on the wrist. Railtrack continues to dish out multi-million-pound contracts to companies with convictions and to supervise them inadequately. It seems the only way a contractor could be banished is by causing an accident involving multiple deaths.

Meanwhile it's business as usual. A Railtrack log leaked to the *Eye* describes how two contractors at Laindon, Essex, had to jump clear of a train to avoid being hit. "When challenged by the driver, the two staff did not appear to know the difference between the up and down lines," says the log. Next day the signaller at Ashford and a maintenance team's supervisor "failed to come to a clear understanding as to what line was actually blocked"; a driver had to slam on his brakes when he saw the men on the track ahead. Later that day contractors were seen repairing the platform edge at Faversham while the adjacent track was open to trains. The contractors had started work more than an hour early, without telling the people who operate the trains.

'Dr B. Ching'

Down on the Farm

FEW areas of Euro regulation arouse more astonishment than the laws on food labelling. The basic principle is that labels may not identify the country where the food was actually grown. Thus it is perfectly legal to import Belgian chickens or Danish bacon and, so long as they are packed in Britain, slap a Union Jack on them as "produce of the UK".

Agriculture secretary Nick Brown and prime minister Tony Blair may hope to kid shoppers that the little red tractor logos now being put on food under the "British farm standard" scheme mean the produce is home grown. But in fact the logo can equally well appear on imported food so long as it allegedly meets UK rules.

When MPs from all parties recently supported a bill making it possible for consumers to know when imported food had been produced under welfare conditions which in Britain would be a criminal offence, they were told by agriculture minister Joyce Quin that, since the bill offended against EU law, it would be "an abuse of parliamentary procedure" to allow it to continue.

When it comes to beef, all the rules against specifying where food has originated go by the board. Here the principle is exactly the reverse. It must be made crystal clear where beef comes from, so no German or French consumers will ever unwittingly have to eat beef from Britain in case they immediately drop dead.

The EU has thus proposed an enormously cumbersome new labelling system (drawn up, as it happens, by a British official) to ensure that all beef is labelled according to its place of origin. Furthermore, no meat product can be sourced from more than one country, despite minced meat products, such as burgers and pasties, often being made from meat collected from two countries or more.

It was previously revealed in this column how it is no longer possible to make burgers solely from British beef because, thanks to the ban on eating cattle over 30 months old, British meat no longer has enough fat on it to stick together. The missing adhesive properties must be supplied by German cows' udders.

Under the proposed new rules, such practices will no longer be possible.

'Even Newer Muckspreader'

Down on the Fish Farm

JOHN Home Robertson, Scotland's clueless fisheries minister, has been fulminating. When a Scottish newspaper editorial fricasseed him for molly-coddling the Dutch and Norwegian fake-fish farmers he is supposed to regulate, "Red John" went ballistic.

He described the leader article as "a travesty" and claimed he has taken "a very active interest in the plight of wild salmon stocks". He said: "I reject the suggestion that the Scottish Executive has either been idle or protective of fish farming at the expense of wild fish interests."

Is this the same John Home Robertson who described Europe's largest ever farm salmon escape, from cages in Orkney, as "No big deal"? (*Eyes* 996 & 1001). Is this the same John who pretended for a year that a report had been sent to the procurator fiscal about the death by suffocation of 240,000 farm salmon in Loch Hourn (Eye 999) when no such report had been sent?

Is this the John who insists there is no scientific evidence to show disease and pollution from fish farms is driving wild salmon to extinction, when the rest of the world recognises that it does? The man who claims persistent toxic algal blooms are "naturally occurring" and nothing to do with fish farm waste dumped into the marine environment? Sadly, yes.

Meanwhile the summer toxic algal season is in full swing along the Scottish west coast and islands where fish farming is rampant. Diarrhetic Shellfish Poison (DSP) has been detected in mussels from Loch Leurbost and Loch Ryan and in queen scallops from Loch Roag. Paralytic Shellfish Poison (PSP) has been detected in mussels in Loch Greshornish, Loch Dunvegan and in Orkney.

On 24 May restrictions on fishing for scallops and queen scallops in Scottish waters because of Amnesic Shellfish Poison (ASP) were lifted. Three weeks later, ASP was back in Loch Roag. PSP has been detected in scallops and queen scallops in North and South Scapa Flow, Orkney. A number of islanders were violently ill after eating razor fish collected from a beach on Shapinsay where PSP was detected (*Eye* 1004)

PSP was found in mussels collected from Ob Dubh/Loch Dunvegan, Loch Hourn and Loch Grashornish. DSP is also present at Ob Dubh. The maximum permitted level of PSP toxin in shellfish is 80 micrograms per 100 grams of flesh. In Little Loch Broom, south from Ullapool, 828 mg per 100g, 10 times the "safe" level, was found in shellfish.

In his response to the damning editorial the minister claimed: "The Scottish [*Shurley "Dutch and Norwegian"? Ed*] fish farm industry has been left in no doubt about my determination to stamp out bad practices... The Executive will not hesitate to take action against backsliders." Yes indeedy, minister, but when?

'Old Trout'

DOING THE ROUNDS

ONE patient who's waiting for evidence that the NHS is a "First Class service in which there is no room for second best" (© department of health, 1999) is David Murphy, who went to his GP in April 1997 with scar tissue in his left hand, impairing movement of the fingers.

This is the same condition Margaret Thatcher suffered from but, unlike her, Mr Murphy wasn't whisked off for private surgery. Instead he was referred to a Mr Percival at West Middlesex hospital. In August 1997, he saw his assistant Dr Yii "who could not guarantee a date for surgery." How prophetic.

In June 1998 (15 months after seeing his GP), he got a letter from Charing Cross hospital giving a date for surgery of 7 September, 1998. A few days before this, he got another letter saying that plastic surgery had moved to Hammersmith or Chelsea and Westminster — and the op was off. Expect a new date and venue soon.

In June 1999 he phoned Chelsea and Westminster for an update and was told that they'd never heard of him. On 26 July, he complained to the chief executive David Highton who expressed "deep regret". This was followed by a letter from the Hammersmith Hospital Quality Service Manager who expressed both "sorrow and regret". But still no op.

On 5 August 1999, Mr Highton vowed to "look into the matter at once". Just four weeks later, he wrote to say "investigations into the issues raised are well underway and I will respond to you in full in the very near future." On 11 October, more apologies and an offer, not of surgery, but of a "review of your condition" by Mr Percival on 29 November. Alas, Mr Murphy was due to be in New Zealand so he phoned appointments to change the date. They have yet to ring back.

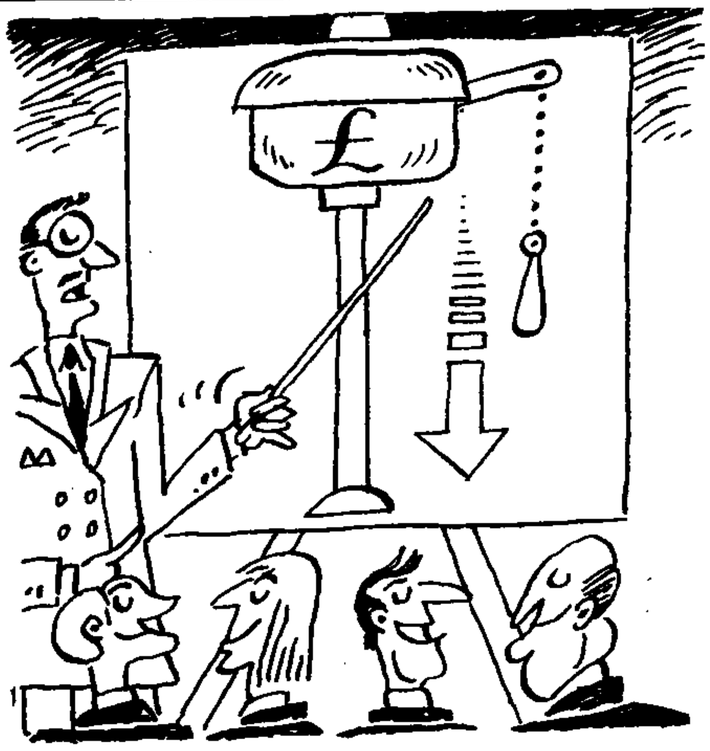
This June he went back to his GP, who was duly horrified and wrote to Mr Percival asking for an urgent referral and surgery. A fortnight later, he saw Mr Percival who asked him to phone his secretary to confirm a date for surgery. They now hope to treat him at the Chelsea and Westminster "within two years" (ie a five-year wait in total) but there is "a very long waiting list caused by the closure of surrounding hospitals".

Also unimpressed with the New Labour NHS is the *Eye*'s impotence expert Sister Nolly Biggins (*Eye* 950) from Doncaster Royal Infirmary. "I am sure that thanks to all the media hype about Viagra, male readers are aware that impotence will effect 10 percent of them. Unfortunately, the majority of sufferers are no longer entitled to get treatment on the NHS," she says.

"Should *Eye* readers become impotent as a result of a heart attack or high blood pressure, they are very likely to be refused treatment." The solution? "Just claim to suffer from colour blindness and you will qualify for treatment under the 'single gene neurological disorder' clause."

M.D.

ROTTEN BOROUGHS



DONNY DÉJÀ VU

ALF TAYLOR, Doncaster council's chief executive, is to step down four months after being found not guilty at a corruption trial in March. Headhunters are to be appointed to seek a successor.

Sounds familiar? It is. Taylor was appointed as acting chief exec in 1997 after the suspension of Doug Hale amid a torrent of sleaze allegations against the Labour council. Taylor, very much the preferred option of new squeaky-clean leader Malcolm Glover, was confirmed in the job 18 months ago after an expensive head-hunting exercise.

He declared that the town must be allowed to put Donnygate behind it. But the new dawn was not helped by the inconvenient regularity with which councillors kept getting themselves arrested. These soon included Taylor's chum Glover, standard-bearer of the Clean Regime. Last week he admitted three specimen charges of expenses fiddling and received a three-month prison sentence suspended for a year, plus a fine of £1,000.

Now, a mere 18 months into his five-year contract, Taylor, 57, is off with an £84,000 payoff and access to a generous pension. And the expensive pantomime of finding a new chief executive begins again.

PS: Last week a further five senior officers and councillors — including Tory group leader John Dainty OBE — were charged with various offences concerning planning fraud and false accounting. More charges were expected as we went to press.

EXCELLENCE UPDATE

LAMBETH COUNCIL's new leader Tom Franklin declares that he wants Lambeth to become known for "excellence", and one of the top performing councils within 1,000 days. In the last month the following examples of excellence have come to light:

- 2,000 staff trusted with looking after children unsupervised have not been police-checked to see if they have convictions for child abuse.
- Three months into the financial year, the social services directorate has overspent by £3.7m — on course for a £13m overspend by April.
- Capita, the "service provider" allegedly in charge of housing benefit (HB) and council tax administration, has been told it is not eligible for £3m of government subsidy because staff forgot to ask HB applicants for proof of identity.
- Deceased council tax benefit claimants have been written to by Crapita telling them that as they are dead they are no longer entitled to receive benefit. The letter helpfully adds: "If you think you may still qualify, please contact us immediately."
- As an incentive to further "excellence", Crapita staff have been told they will receive £5 for every missing HB file they find. As a result, some of the hundreds of "lost" files have suddenly been found... including some which only went missing after the reward was offered.

CARRY ON COUNCILLOR

A new series highlighting councillors' most brilliant ideas...

AFTER seeing a TV news item on how the Libyan dictator Col Gaddafi planned to develop an "indestructible car" that would end the world dominance of Ford, Toyota, *et al*, veteran Cardiff Labour councillor Charlie Gale wrote to Gaddafi ("c/o the Libyan Embassy, London") suggesting he might like to build it on the site of a derelict paper works in the city.

Perhaps the colonel would be able to obtain EU funding, suggested Gale. After weeks went by with no reply, Gale wrote again. Still no reply. He has now written to Euro MP Glenys Kinnock, suggesting she have a chat with the colonel when she next bumps into him at a European summit. If Glenys ever replies, perhaps she will gently explain there are currently no plans to admit Libya to the EU...

They also run an erection service for pensioners and the disabled. *Monmouthshire Beacon*

ON THE SPIKE

FREEDOM of speech is off the menu in Liverpool. Last November Karen Sibson was appointed editor of *Council People* (the council's staff magazine) and *Liverpool City* (a mag distributed to the public), and told she had free reign to edit as she pleased.

Soon, however, she was told she could not quote trade union spokesmen unless they had something "positive and constructive" to say. Editorial conferences became a sham as senior management dictated what should go in the mags. Sibson suggested interviewing a council solicitor seconded to the Hillsborough families support group, which was prosecuting senior police officers who were on duty on the day of the disaster in which scores of Liverpool fans died. She was told she couldn't do it because "Hillsborough is in the past". So she quit.

A final editorial in which Sibson explained that management interference was the main reason for her resignation was spiked. Within hours she was ordered to clear her desk and escorted off council property.

BROMLEY council has decided it is "not in the public interest" to prosecute any of the parties involved in the felling of an oak tree for Channel 4's *Time Team* reconstruction of the Sea Henge ancient monument. So common sense prevails at last – for, as explained in *Eye* 994, one tree is no loss at all to a properly managed woodland. The thing, in conservation terms, is to ensure the continuity of the wood as a whole. Nor will tree officer Coral Gibson get her wish for a happy snap of all the associated parties grouped around a sapling planted in the wood to "replace" the "lost" tree, after all. Real conservationists know that you don't go round planting trees in ancient woods, thereby promoting two myths: that woods are plantations and that trees need human intervention to reproduce.

Meanwhile "Clean and Green" Bromley is merrily pressing ahead with plans to obliterate more than 12 acres of Crystal Palace park, trees and all, to create a 4,800-seat cinema complex and 950-space car park. Some confusion, surely?

High Principals

MAY we offer profound apologies to the further education lecturers database Education Lecturing Services (ELS, aka Education Learning Services) for implying in the last *Eye* that its fortunes might be on the wane? In fact the reverse is true.

ELS was recently bought out by Bridgepoint Capital, the breakaway venture capital firm that was formerly NatWest Equity Partners, for the modest sum of £40m. Geoff Lennox and Richard Fielding, the founders of parent company Protocol Associates, will still be involved in the running of both ELS and its US counterpart PNI.

ELS, which has a database of 63,000 lecturers, is exactly the kind of firm the government wants to promote, providing the perfect complement to its programme of cutting further education funding by providing an easy source for supply lecturers. The company maintains close links with David Blunkett's department for education and employment (DfEE).

Company secretary John Evans was appointed one of 16 schools adjudicators by the DfEE in April. And a former ELS director, John Kirkland OBE, also a governor of Landau Forte College in Derbyshire, has just been appointed chairman of the new Learning and Skills Council for the East Midlands.

THE UNIVERSITY OF READING
PRE-UNIVERSITY TASTER COURSE IN FOOD SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

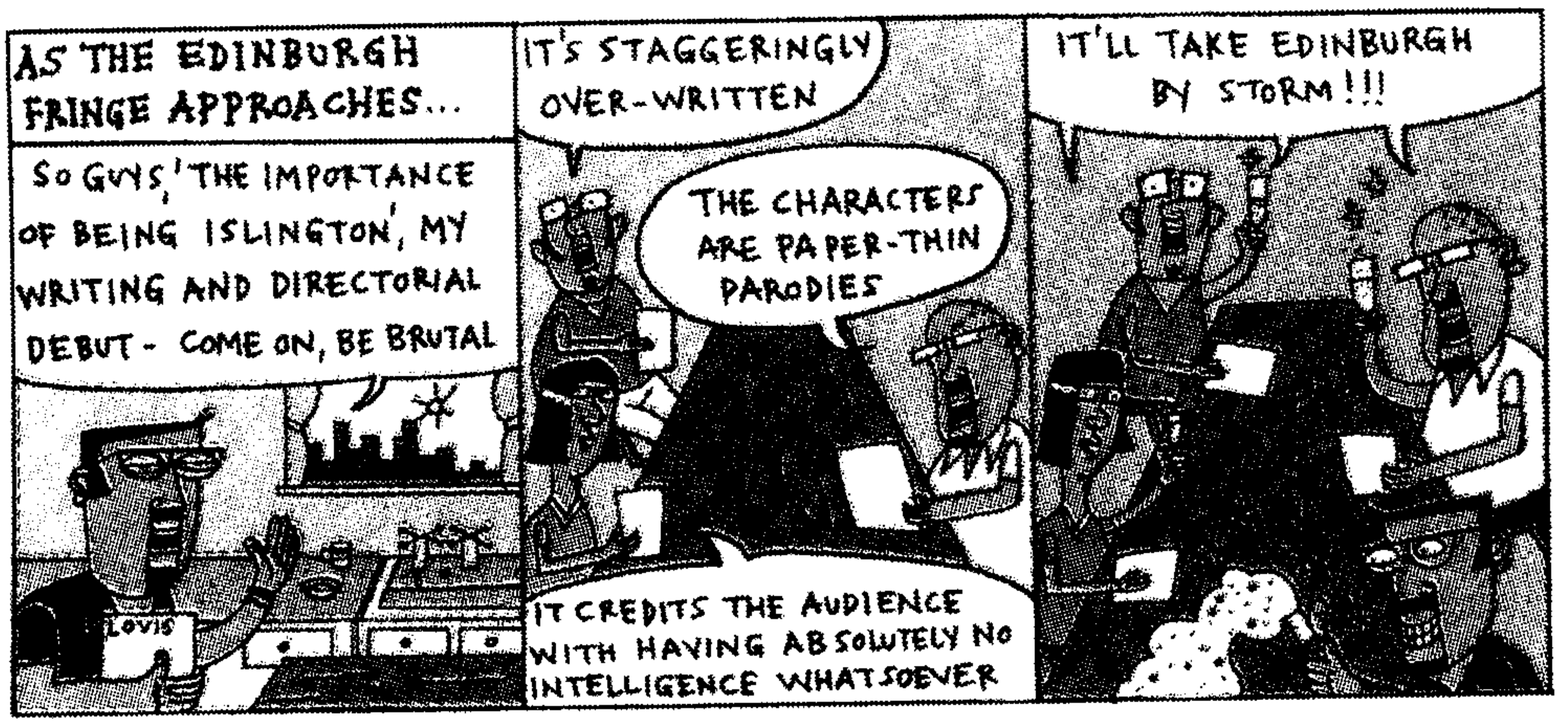
Advertisement, Independent Education Supplement

THE ONLY people not concerned by the case of Paul Coleshill, a Paisley economics lecturer who was forced to remove incorrect academic credentials from his CV are, er, his employers at Paisley University.

Coleshill included references to articles he had published in prestigious academic journals, but it was later discovered that this information was false. The university took no action, but the matter resurfaced in the *Times Higher Education Supplement* and the *Mail on Sunday* earlier this month when Coleshill was selected to stand as the Liberal Democrat candidate for the Westminster seat of Argyll and Bute. It was also revealed that he was referred to as Dr Coleshill in some of his campaign literature, since withdrawn, wrongly implying that he has a PhD.

Despite his claims that he is victim of a smear campaign, Coleshill has been forced to step down as parliamentary candidate. His academic prospects are brighter, however: not only has he kept his job but he has been shortlisted by the university to become head of economics and entrepreneurship, a post commanding a handsome professorial salary.

IT's GRIM UP NORTH LONDON — UP NORTH KNIFE & PACKER


AS THE EDINBURGH FRINGE APPROACHES...
SO GUYS, 'THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ISLINGTON', MY WRITING AND DIRECTORIAL DEBUT - COME ON, BE BRUTAL
LOVIS
IT'S STAGGERINGLY OVER-WRITTEN
THE CHARACTERS ARE PAPER-THIN PARODIES
IT CREDITS THE AUDIENCE WITH HAVING ABSOLUTELY NO INTELLIGENCE WHATSOEVER
IT'LL TAKE EDINBURGH BY STORM!!!

TV

Stars And Their Lives (ITV)

You Only Live Once (BBC1)

Celebrity Rehab (C4)

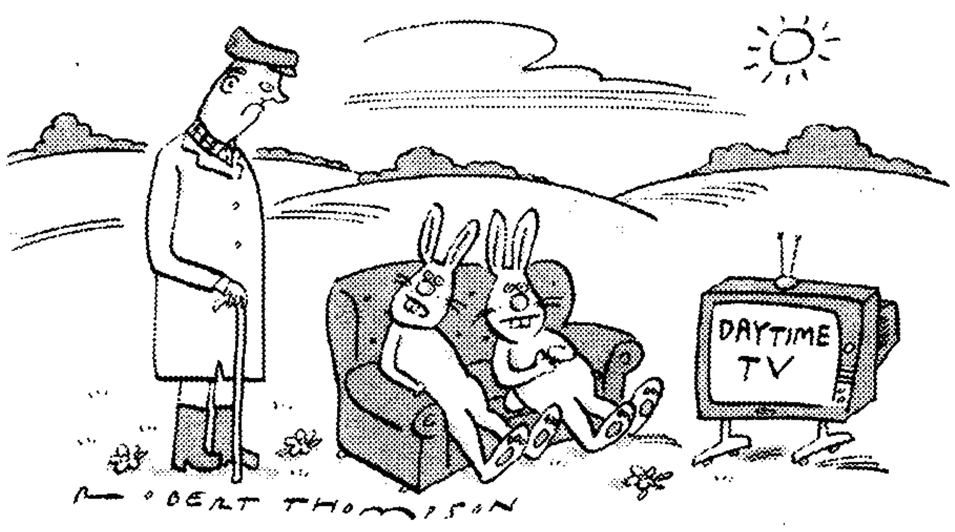
TELEVISION without celebrities: it might have been possible once, but not any more. If they're not chatting and plugging, they're presenting or cooking or travelling to inhospitable climes with camera crews; or showing Nigel Havers around their lavish new holiday homes on the Cap d'Antibes.

And when television has run out of real celebrities, which takes about five minutes, it creates its own micro-celebrities to fill the gaps. Harriott. Feltz. Titchmarsh. Winton. Jeremy Vine out of Newsnight.

Gradually, then, the defining qualities of celebrity have been eroded to such an extent that *Celebrity Squares* has had to be taken off because no one had heard of any of the celebrities in the squares. But we are now so hooked on the idea of celebrity that all we want to watch — so TV executives believe — are yet more programmes about celebrities doing celebrity things, often with other celebrities. Even if you can't get the real celebrities, you can get people to impersonate them on *Stars In Their Eyes*: people who will then meet the celebrities they want to be and perform duets with them and possibly even become micro-celebrities themselves, which is enough to make bits of brain shoot out of your ears at high velocity.

And so we have **Stars And Their Lives**, and we have **You Only Live Once**, and we even have **Celebrity Rehab**, if you're really desperate. (Think of a word, any word. Put "Celebrity" in front of it. *Et voilà*! A two-part series on Channel 4.) Each of these shows is aimed at a particular market, each approaches its subject slightly differently; but with each show the result is the same: vicarious *Hello!*-style glances at the lives of "famous" people, one or two of whom you might actually have heard of.

Stars And Their Lives is perhaps the strangest of this latest crop in that it has arrived virtually unheralded, yet it sits slap-bang in the middle of ITV's all-important Saturday night schedule. Carol Vorderman — who else? — squats chinlessly on a huge sofa. A celebrity lounges on another huge sofa. The studio audience pant with celebrity worship. Friends of the celebrity come forward to say what a marvellous chap he is. On film slightly lazier friends of the celebrity say the same thing. Carol, who has a whole bag of onions hidden somewhere about her person, says it again. At the end of the show a long-lost relative or friend, who has Just Flown In, is brought on to hug the celebrity. You can just about hear the hydraulic pumps sluicing the audience's tears out of the studio. Credits roll, Carol picks up cheque, viewers attempt to keep dinner down.



"Watership Down? Naah mate... this is Dumbing-down"

Familiar, is this, by any chance? Funnily enough ITV used to have a very similar show called *This Is Your Life*, which it foolishly gifted to the BBC a few years ago. Copyright lawyers would doubtless be able to identify vital differences between the two formats — shortage of red book; subject knows he's going to be on; presenter not standing up throughout show — but no one else is fooled. Last week's George Best tribute reached heights of fawning admiration even Saddam Hussein might consider excessive.

BBC1's equivalent, *You Only Live Once*, is supposed to be spikier and more iconoclastic, although it isn't at all. Six assorted celebrities, each with a recorded tendency towards notoriety, are taken through the scraps and offcuts of their eventful lives by Nick Hancock and his clipboard, as all the same old friends file the same old filmed reports about how naughty/misunderstood/fantastically rich he or she has been. The idea, it seems, is to embarrass the subject with these revelations; but most of the subjects chosen (Boy George, Mohammed al Fayed, Ozzy Osbourne) are so far beyond embarrassment they probably wouldn't notice. Indeed, it's amazing Jeffrey Archer isn't on. So far the most uncomfortable person on stage has been Hancock, who has some good lines (supplied by five well-paid writers) but no real feel for hosting a chat show. Interesting new chin collection, though.

Of *Celebrity Rehab* perhaps the least said the better, for we all know in our hearts that it is the sheer horror and emptiness of celebrity life that forces them to hang out at dismal parties and take all those drugs. Then on Sunday on BBC1, there's *Celebrity Holiday Memories* and. . . enough, please, enough.

'Square Eyes'

SPLIT personalities

Bob Moore

Muhammad Ali McBeal

MEDIA NEWS

CHANNEL 4's quiz show *Countdown* has produced its share of embarrassing moments over the years, what with letters like C, U and N making it on to the board with a letter to spare and the appalling Richard Whiteley irritatingly on screen since the show's launch.

But perhaps the most embarrassing moment of all came on 10 July when Carol Vorderman, current salary £3m per year, was seen standing smugly by the eight-letter word, OVERPAID.

GOING LIVE

ITN nightly news 19 July: Correspondent Libby Wiener reports live from outside the Queen Mum's residence at 11.15pm to reveal that the QM "may have enjoyed a Dubonnet or two" and that "she may have stayed up a bit late" on the day of her birthday celebrations.

There was absolutely no evidence for either "fact" — indeed no light was on in the building behind her, suggesting that everybody had watched ITN's opening titles and decided to go to bed.

STAFF at the BBC's rundown Pebble Mill studios were given a recent morale boost with the news that work has at last begun on new offices for the controller of English regions. The grandly titled suite will be able to enjoy a sweeping array of "spaces", "drop in zones" and "coffee corners" that will take up the entire sixth floor at a cost of £300,000.

Meanwhile Pebble Mill's busy post production unit has been told that its crappy equipment will not be renewed because "new equipment will not generate new business". This means that programmes like *Dangerfield*, *Dalziel and Pascoe*, *The Scarlett Pimpernel* and *Doctors* will continue to give their technicians kittens as they fight to put them on the air. The cost of a new editing suite? £60,000. The number urgently required? Six. Total cost? Er... £360,000.

LUVVIES

"I love funny people. They're the best company and they're so brave. I just adore Eddie Izzard, because he'll push out all the boundaries, do anything. Maybe that's one of the reasons we do what we do; it's the need to challenge your own limitations, face the fear and walk out the other side."

ERIC IDLE
Sunday Times Magazine

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

AD NAUSEAM

ONE of the few pleasing aspects of the advertising industry is that agencies get sacked.

Whereas the miserable consumer only has to suffer the ads themselves, the clients sometimes have to endure month upon month of cant and casuistry (known as the creation of a strategy), so when poor sales figures or limp forecasts appear, they shoot the messenger.

So what happened with the millennium dome? Our friends at M&C Saatchi threw together a lavish cross-media spread centred on their "one amazing day" strap which, you will recall, implied that the summation of all human achievement was crystallised in the big top.

Like it or loathe it, the campaign was an extravagant push for one of the most public failures in recent years. The summation of human achievement, we now know, is fast food and men on stilts; the building that surrounds it will likely-as-not be sold for corporate love-ins at a desultory fee come Christmas. Little more need be said about visitor targets, bad press, tendentious sponsorship: the fact is, no one's going. If an advertising agency can be said conclusively to have failed in its task, surely this is it.

Yet here comes another campaign just off this week, spawn of M&C, which features Mondeo man mouthing off about the dome's various failings (all, rather unfortunately, close to the mark) before panning back to reveal that he is wearing a sheepskin Arthur Daley jacket, and – wait for it – is a sheep. The line is: "If you've got a mind of your own, take it to the dome."

Not only is this a brazen about-turn peddled as a cunning strategy shimmy; it also beggars belief with its gall. If everyone thought for themselves, as the ad recommends, M&C and every other advertising agency would be out of business before you could say target audience. The accompanying gush from M&C's managing director Tim Duffy is worth quoting for a laugh: "This is a confident strategy and we are facing up to the issue. It's time that people knew the real story." The real story is that M&C's initial failings were part and parcel of that same "issue".

So why hasn't the agency got the boot? Equally to the point, why did it get the account in the first place? Way back in 1999, when the appointment was announced, all the talk was of shady dealings, a spot of friendly log-rolling – and suddenly without any competitive pitch or recognised process, the Saatchi bods scooped the year's hottest account. If it wasn't won by recognised means, one can't expect it to be lost by them, can one?

PAGEANT FARCE

MUSIC & MUSICIANS

ALL is not well in the reflective, pencil-chewing world of music criticism.

Warning bells are ringing. And the other week, during the annual Britten lecture at the Aldeburgh Festival, they were rung like crazy by the distinguished grand seigneur of the profession, Andrew Porter: formerly of the *New Yorker*, latterly of the *Observer* and *TLS*.

Porter's complaint — delivered to an audience of the culturally great and good — was that serious criticism is in terminal decline: a victim of down-market pressure from newspapers and editorial ignorance. Sadly, he named no names; but his discretion was not matched by a member of his audience who decided to denounce the new music critic of the *Independent on Sunday*, describing her reviews as "a weekly frock report".

Upholders of critical standards have been further alarmed to find David Mellor adding to his already considerable business and media interests by writing about music for the *Mail on Sunday*. In itself there's nothing wrong with that: he knows a lot about recordings. But only last year he admitted on a radio show that he dislikes live concerts, rarely goes to them and doesn't think there's anyone around whose performances bear comparison with the artists of the past.

These are not ideal credentials for a music critic. Nor is the fact that he has just been appointed president of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. Still, as he doesn't go to concerts, he presumably won't be writing about his own band.

'Lunchtime O'Boulez'

DUMB BRITAIN

MORE answers to £1,000 questions from contestants on ITV's daytime magazine show *This Morning*, mostly presented by Richard and Judy.

Q: *On which court at Wimbledon was the men's final played?*
A: Earl's Court.
Q: *What do you call the big pole that goes up the middle of a ship?*
A: Pass.

Not to be outdone, Radio 2 popmaster Ken Bruce had a listener completely foxed on 10 July when he asked: "Which Mike Oldfield hit took its title from a southern English coastal town?"

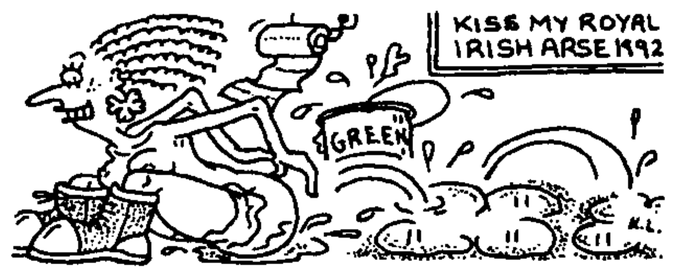
"Tubular Bells," came the reply.

Pseuds Corner

Radiohead have pushed their rock trolley out into deep space and come back with something so complex it makes the hieroglyphics on the pyramids look like graffiti on a bus-stop. While most of their peers seem content with punting their pop pedalo around their local lido, Radiohead have constructed a crazy intergalactic rock coracle out of the Difficult Jazz Things section at HMV, and they're rowing it to Mars.

CAITLIN MORAN
The Times

The way in which Cheryl Donegan addresses authority and engages with stereotypes is quite different. Clad in green underwear and welder's boots for the performance of 'Kiss My Royal Irish Ass' (1992),



Donegan dips her bottom in green paint and prints it twice over on a sheet of paper, producing a beautiful four-cheeked clover or abstracted shamrock. This process is repeated several times to the beatbox accompaniment of a medley of Irish tunes...

"Kin" exhibition, Kerlin Gallery Dublin

The net ran between them like a razor wire dividing a single Williams cell; a time-line showing the ultimate separateness of their lives.

PAUL HAYWARD
(on the Wimbledon ladies' singles final)
Daily Telegraph

People always think I'm exaggerating, but for four or five months after Joe le Taxi hit number one, life became a nightmare. There were hateful, horrible things said about me. Most of the time it was people my own age, but it was also adults. I've experienced, I guess, what women who slept with Germans in France around 1940 were experiencing in the streets. When people threw stones at them and shaved their heads. I was paranoid and freaked out about people. It was horrible, horrible.

VANESSA PARADIS
Nova

I started the book near Poitiers, wrote a bit more in Romania, where I was staying for six months, then I went to London. Soon after a friend of mine, who's a chef, got a job in Paris and offered me his place in the Dordogne. The locals called me the ghost. I'll probably end up finishing the book I'm currently writing in Lithuania, where I've rather carelessly left my girlfriend.

EDWARD CAREY
'How I Write', The Times

The book [Wisconsin Death Trap] was made to move rhythmically and incrementally, like a Gamelan concert; it relied on a viewer/reader to decipher – and participate in – its coded progressions as if they were elements of a collage built like a raga. John Cage and William Burroughs were as much its godfathers as Max Ernst and John Heartfield. Minor White and Ralph Gibson's photo sequences had as much influence as Bob Dylan's Blonde on Blonde and John Wesley Harding.

MICHAEL LESY
The Guardian

The journal will examine the relationship between tourism and related fields of social inquiry. The figure of the tourist and styles of tourist consumption are not only emblematic of many features of contemporary social change, such as mobility, restlessness, the search for authenticity and escape, but they are increasingly central to economic restructuring, the sociology of consumption and the aestheticization of everyday life.

Flyer for 'Tourism Studies: an international journal'

CONTRIBUTORS: Mrs P. Thorpe, Alan Crily, Alan M. Cohen, Anon, Peter Jackson, Joanna Guthrie, Eluned Price.

£10 paid for entries

Letters

Mother's Day

Sir,

*Regarding police "harassment" in your piece entitled "suck it and see" (1006). You might like to know that in "street" culture "sucking teeth" is a non-verbal way of saying "suck your mother's c***".*

Yours,
DAZED & CONFUSED,
Her Majesty's Young Offenders' Institution, Bucks.

Million apologies

Sir,

Fact to remember: Mr Matthew Barrett's projected earnings for this financial year are actually £36m rather than the conservative £1.7m your article in Eye 1006 suggests.

Yours sincerely,
ALASTAIR SMITH,
Via e-mail.

Richard the Absurd?

Sir,

Re: Branson's latest joke on the consumer. In a full-page advertisement in the Observer (and probably most other papers) Virgin Energy makes the following statement: "The Time has come to vote yourself into power. To take power out of the hands of those institutions that, for too long, have grossly overcharged for such basic needs."

So what went wrong when Virgin took over a large section of our railways?

Yours sincerely,
BRIAN P. MOSS,
Tamworth, Staffs.

Taking Lock stock

Sir,

Regrettably David Lock in his attempt to untangle the Wyres, (Letter, "Lock here", Eye 1006) has, I believe, actually crossed them again.

Kidderminster at present has an acute general hospital. With Mr Lock's agreement it is about to lose its "blue light" accident & emergency department and all its acute inpatient beds for elective and emergency cases. That amounts to closure of an acute general hospital in most people's language.

Yes! 90 percent of patients will still be treated there because about that proportion of patients attending any acute general hospital are there for outpatients, day case surgery or investigations. Mr Lock omits to point out that 100 percent of acute inpatients will have to go elsewhere, even up to 35 miles from their families and friends.

*I wish campaigners had had the chance of accepting the "sensible balanced report by the King's Fund". It was never offered to them **in full**. As Mr Lock will remember the compromise he tried to broker in May 1998 lacked several key features of the report, particularly the final recommendation for an independently audited, pilot project of the Ambulatory Care Unit **before** any irrevocable decisions on the future of the hospital were taken.*

The renal unit he has secured for Kidderminster can only be a unit for routine outpatient dialysis. Is this what Joe Public understands such a unit to be?

Treatment for heart attack victims does not mean admission to Kidderminster Hospital. Oh no! It means diverting the ambulance taking them from home or work to Worcester Royal Infirmary via the minor injuries unit at Kidderminster where they will be given the clot-busting drug.

Yours faithfully,
R.T. TAYLOR,
Chairman, Kidderminster Hospital Campaign and Health Concern.

Completely loopy

Sir,

For the second time in three issues, you have used selective extracts from private e-mails to try to discredit me, and in turn the UK Independence Party for whom I work.

*That the 12 golden stars of the E.U. flag have been a papal symbol for hundreds of years is not a "claim"; it's a **fact** acknowledged by many, not least the Papacy itself which in many of its publications claims that woman of Revelation 12 v. 1, surrounded by the crown of 12 stars, is the Virgin Mary.*

If the facts set out in my e-mail are said to be "anti-Catholic", they are no more so than the Queen's official position. During her Coronation she vowed to "maintain to the utmost of my power the Protestant Reformed Religion established by law" and declared she was "a faithful Protestant".

Moreover, the Declaration and Bill of Rights of 1688/9, which entrenched the British people's Magna Carta rights and still constitute a permanent contract between the Queen and her people, assert that ". . .it hath been found by experience that it is inconsistent with the safety and welfare of this Protestant Kingdom to be governed by a Popish prince or any King or Queen marrying a Papist". They guarantee amongst other things freedom of speech, conscience and religion and have served us well for the past 312 years.

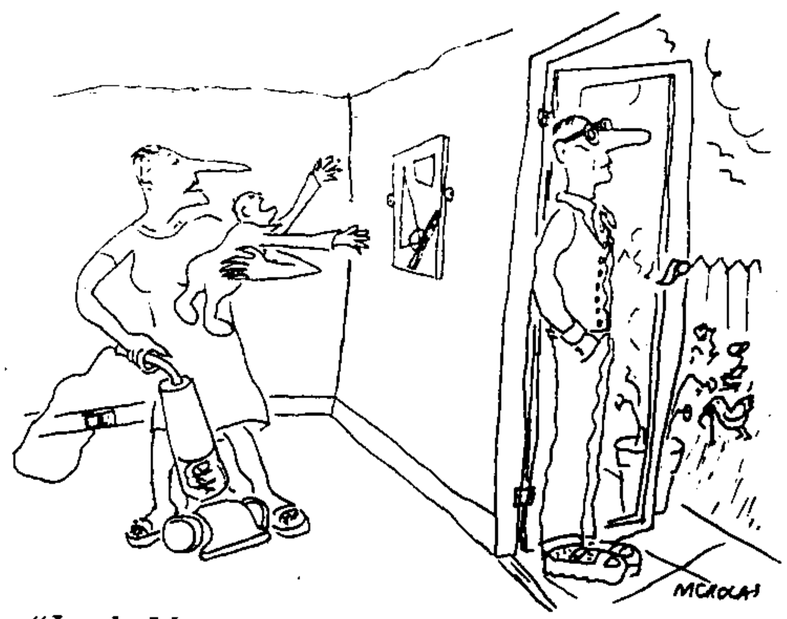
That said, any views I have on the Papacy are private and not part of Party policy, though we are the only Party to promise in our Constitution to maintain the integrity of the UK, its laws, liberties and customs. We do not seek to undo the Declaration and Bill of Rights as the other three main parties do.

On the other points in "Focus on UKIP":

The march you refer to was a multiracial march organised by "Save our Sovereignty" in support of British independence from the EU, followed by a rally addressed by Conservative and UKIP MEPs and leading barristers, not a UKIP anti-single currency march.

UKIP member Dr Ian Sadler's book on the EU, far from being "magnificently loopy", as you describe it, is packed with facts that any Briton concerned about his future freedoms and liberties should know. Has "Backbiter" actually read it?

Yours sincerely,
TONY BENNETT,
Political Assistant to Jeffrey Titford MEP, UKIP.



"Look, I know men can't multi-task, but I'd be grateful if you mono-tasked once in a while!"

Royal birth day

Sir,

Contrary to your statement, Brenda was not born at 145 Piccadilly but at 17 Bruton Street (the London home of her maternal grandparents).

BARBARA LONG,
Via e-mail.

Blood money

Sir,

I was interested in your piece (Eye 1005) about the generous response to the request for a gong for the 100 pint blood-donor. This generosity of spirit extends to the whole blood-donor service which has stopped, without as far as I know any public discussion, on marking with a small ceremony the donation of 50 pints of blood.

Yours faithfully,
BARBARA JACOBS,
Lewes, Sussex.

Lookalike

Tam Dalyell

Chris Evans

Sir,

These men are surely related.

F. EVANS,
Brighton.

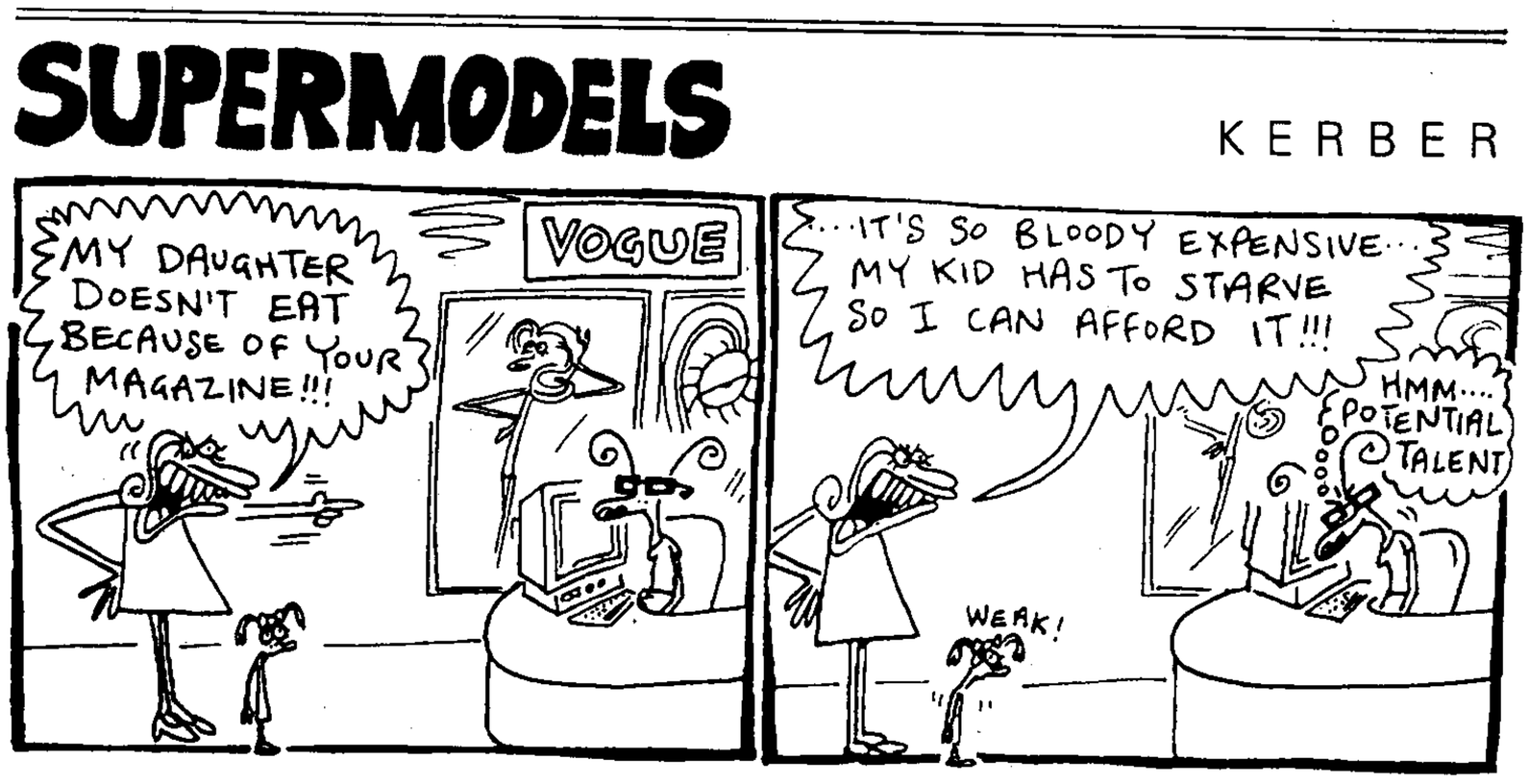
Consistently yours

Sir,

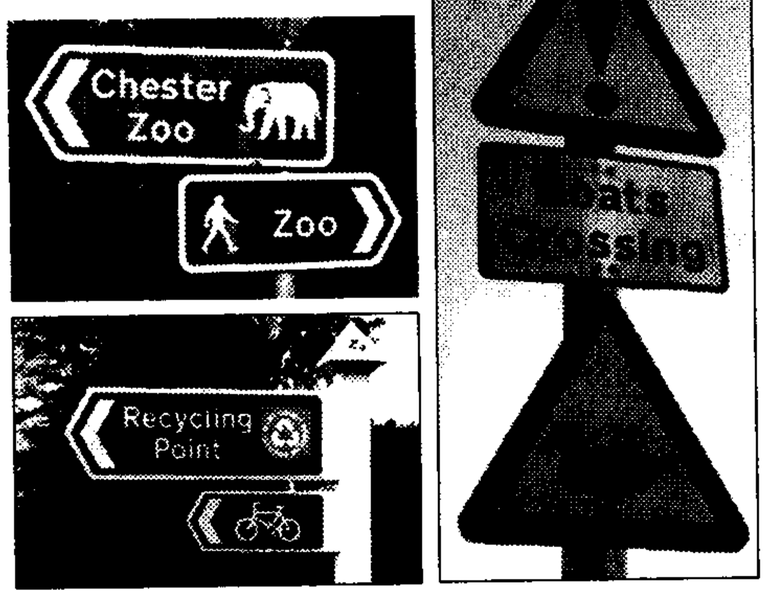
Had you bothered to check the facts (Eye 1006), you would have seen that the cases of the two nurses convicted of offences relating to child pornography were quite different, and that they don't represent "extraordinary inconsistency" on the part of the United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting (UKCC).

The circumstances surrounding the two cases, the sentences passed and the statements by the judges were different. It would be very easy but very wrong for a regulatory body like the UKCC to say that, where cases seem slightly similar on the face of it, they should be treated identically. This would certainly lead to miscarriages of justice, something which Private Eye has a well-deserved reputation for campaigning against in the criminal justice system. The UKCC is, in fact, still investigating both cases. The decisions to suspend John Howe and not Derek Longmuir were interim decisions and do not represent this regulator's final judgements on professional misconduct.

Yours sincerely,
STUART SKYTE,
Head of Communications, UKCC.


SUPERMODELS
KERBER
MY DAUGHTER DOESN'T EAT BECAUSE OF YOUR MAGAZINE!!!
VOGUE
...IT'S SO BLOODY EXPENSIVE... MY KID HAS TO STARVE SO I CAN AFFORD IT!!!
HMM.... POTENTIAL TALENT
WEAK!

I-SPY



Submitted by Joe Holyoak, David Wilson, Mrs Vivien Hope. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

OK-man Islands?

Sir,

Re: In The City, 10 June 2000. Your editorial contained more than the usual amount of piffle in relation to the Cayman Islands. Guardian Bank was shut down by the Cayman islands monetary authority in concert with the US authorities for which action the Cayman Islands Government received commendation. Other institutions have received similar treatment by the CIMA. The subsequent action with regard to the disclosure of confidential information by the indicted former CEO, Matheson, was not brought by the Cayman Islands government as you suggest but by the liquidators of Guardian Bank for reasons best known to themselves. A more correct position is that recognised by the OECD after a two-year evaluation and which places the Cayman Islands now on its most favoured jurisdiction list. If tax evasion is the issue then may I suggest that you focus your attentions somewhere closer to home.

Yours,
ANTHONY TRAVERS, OBE,
Chairman, Cayman Islands Stock Exchange.

● ***Slicker writes:*** *A more correct position is that of the Financial Action Task Force, set up by the G7 countries, which last month put the Caymans among those not cooperating against money laundering. The Guardian liquidators were government appointees.*

THE GAY DADS: Real Life
ITV, 10pm; except Ulster *The Times*

Pots and kettles

Sir,

Noticed in yesterday's Mail (4 July) an alarming statement from Julie "Butchill" regarding dead Sixties rock icon Jim Morrison whom she described as: "Usually off his head on an exotic cocktail of drink and drugs and obviously no use to anyone..."

Kettle calling pot perhaps?

Regards,
MICK BOLTON,
Seacroft, Leeds.

Mail bonding?

Sir,

Re: Homophilia. Without any warning of a change in policy, you have overturned the Eye's cherished tradition of reporting all matters homosexual with distaste, disapproval and derision. Apparently, according to HACKWATCH (Eye 1006), David Copeland's homophobic and racist quest may have been influenced by the "'incessant message' peddled over many years by, er, the Daily Mail and the Sun".

What a relief then to read in the very same issue about Roddam Q Twiss (IN THE CITY), "whose personal predilection for not sparing the rod has earned him the nickname in certain City and rent boy circles of 'Roddam from Sodom'", which although of no relevance to the story was totally pertinent since, after all, you were exposing him as a total rotter.

One trusts that this piece represents only a momentary lapse in judgement.

Yours retentively,
JOSHUA GREEN,
Via e-mail.

Iraq irate

Sir,

Of course there is "a London-based spin campaign against anti-sanction protests" (re Iraq), as you say in Eye 1006, page 13, but does the Eye itself have to join in the general silence? Mainstream newspapers tell us all about a thousand less important issues while almost ignoring the fact that half a million children have died because of sanctions. I realise that your organ is not into moral protest, but it is surely your job to make fun of Tony Blair. You might like to point out the contrast between his pious rhetoric, Christian views, etc, and the unspeakable tragedy which has been unfolding in Iraq, before our eyes, for years.

Yours sincerely,
DR MERRYN WILLIAMS,
Wootton, Bedford.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"He [Courtney Walsh] has had a rest, Mikey, and a rest is as good as a break."
IAN BOTHAM, Sky TV
(Gordon Barlow)

"...and day will fade to dusk, lit by the smell of barbecues."
ELEANOR OLDROYD, Radio 4
(Frazer Clark)

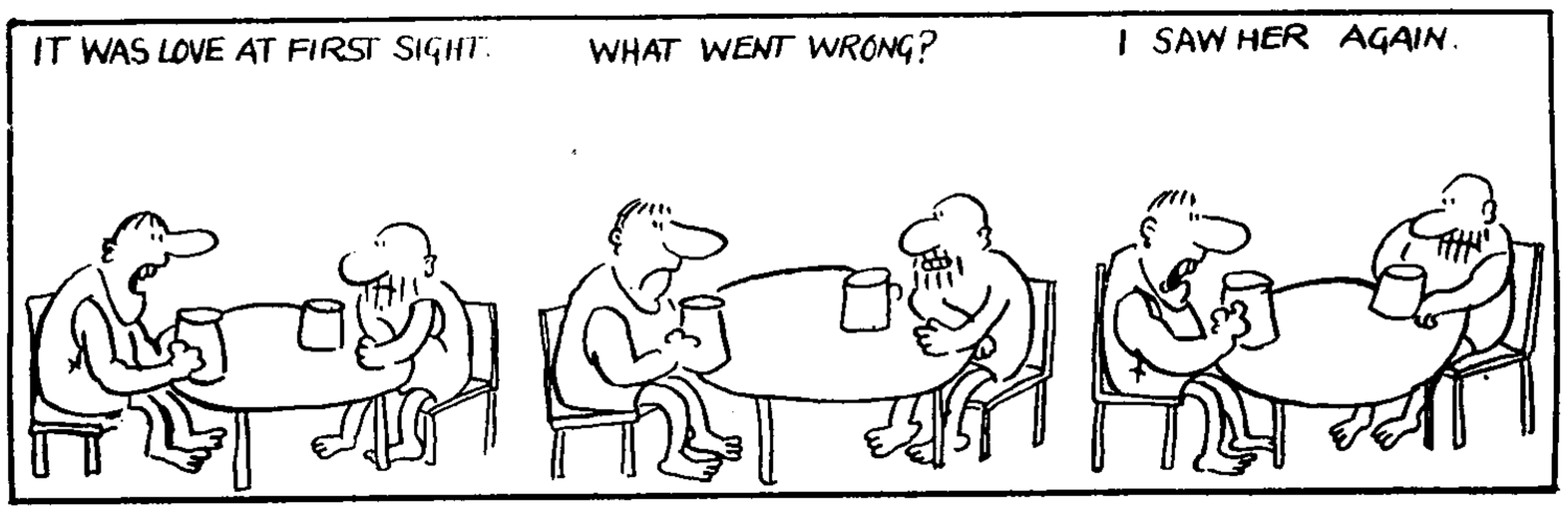
"As Sampras prepares to put another notch in the history books..."
RICHARD EVANS, Radio 5 Live
(John Mullarkey)

"You're on the horns of a two-edged blade!"
WALLY WEBB, BBC Radio Norfolk
(John Joslin)

"I had a feeling today that Venus Williams would either win or lose."
MARTINA NAVRATILOVA, BBC
(Peter Beynon)

HOM SAP

AUSTIN



Letter from **Sri Lanka**

from Our Own Correspondent

"IF THIS is justice," we seem to remember an editor in London once remarking, "then I'm a banana." Editors in Sri Lanka probably feel more like mangled mangoes than bananas.

They are the latest victims of our president's ongoing battle with the truth. Libel in this tropical pearl is treated as a criminal rather than civil offence, which means hacks face jail sentences if they have the courage to cast aspersions against our head of state and defence minister, Mrs Chandrika Kumaratunga, who is among the most redoubtable in the pantheon of South Asia's leading ladies.

In a recent case one reporter published a diary story alleging that Madam President — as she likes to be known — entered a late night party via a side window. Such apparently harmless tittle tattle has landed the unfortunate hack in the dock, a victim, it would seem, of presidential displeasure for having drawn attention to such an enterprising mode of arrival at a party hosted — horror upon horror to our chattering classes — by a divorced member of parliament.

Madam president's ongoing argument with reality first came to light in her official biography, which claimed that "Dr" Kumaratunga received her PhD from the Sorbonne. It later emerged that she had in fact studied at the French equivalent of Neasden polytechnic, and even then had failed to complete the course. It seems the only degree she does possess comes from the Sri Lankan Martial Arts Society, which recently awarded her an honorary doctorate.

The next round in her battle against the incontrovertible came soon after she was elected president in 1994. Dismayed by press criticism of her failure to defeat Tamil Tiger separatists in the north and east of the country, she introduced a harsh system of censorship which prevented the media from reporting anything negative about a 17-year-old war that has claimed 60,000 lives.

Even today, vast chunks of news copy relating to the conflict are deleted by her chief censor. This job belongs to Ariya Rubasinghe, who has the Orwellian job title of Director of Information (Competent Authority). He has difficulty with English and is barely literate, with a reputation for making advances towards foreign journalists — male and female.

Following a series of catastrophic military reverses earlier this year, Mrs Kumaratunga decided further to squeeze the press. She closed down one newspaper, the *Sunday Leader*, after it circumvented the censorship laws by publishing an article entitled "War in fantasy land". The offending article had been cleared for publication by Mr Rubasinghe, who failed to spot the obvious irony in a piece that reported the opposite of what really was happening. Hence what should have been "Tamil Tigers wipe out our boys on the battle-field" became "We done good, says president". Our leader is less easily fooled, however, and threw her not inconsiderable weight behind the campaign against the paper.

When the ban on the *Sunday Leader* was successfully challenged in the courts last month, Madam president had a rethink. Hacks would be "invited" to submit their stories to Mr Rubasinghe if there was a danger their copy might compromise national security. The idea was that scribes would exercise voluntary restraint in the same way hacks in the mother country are urged to refrain from publishing compromising photographs of Prince William. The difference here is that a spell in Colombo nick awaits those who forget to include the Director of Information (Competent Authority) in their editorial calculations.

Matters might be a little better if we had an opposition to point out all such excesses as we prepare for parliamentary elections later this year. But Mr Ranil Wickremasinghe, Madam president's rival for our affections, has the charisma of a road hump and the backbone of a chocolate éclair. He opposes nothing and proposes less, spurred on to such inactivity by MPs from both sides, who rejoice in plans under consideration by the presidency to exempt all their number from duty on imported cars — a bung matched only in its obviousness as by its substantial proportions. Meanwhile, the war in the north and east drags on and peace remains a distant dream.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH

"When the police officer told me that my son was being charged with assault, I just looked at him and said 'are you serious?'" Shelley Falkenham told reporters in Halifax, Nova Scotia. "Calling the police over a scent infraction is ridiculous. Gary cares about his hygiene, so he always wears Dippity Do hair gel and Aqua Velva deodorant to school. Why should he be punished for wanting to be clean?"

The criminal charges levelled against seventeen-year-old Gary Falkenham were the latest victory for anti-perfume activists in Nova Scotia, who claim to suffer from Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS). "Halifax has become the world's anti-perfume hysteria hotbed," lamented Michael Fumento, who dismissed MCS symptoms as "a badge of collective gullibility, the brainchild of affluent hypochondriacs. Last week, an eighty-four-year-old Halifax woman was thrown out of city hall just because she wore

perfume to a council meeting. Yet there is no evidence that MCS even exists, or that perfumes pose any greater threat to the average human than exposure to body odour, bad breath, or any other smells. This is an example of a public health debate corrupted by victim culture."

But Tanya MacDonald (the teacher who had reported Gary Falkenham to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police) was unrepentant. "MCS is not very pleasant, I can tell you. I never come to school without my medication and puffers, things like that, just in case. You can't take a chance. The school's policy isn't nearly tough enough on pupils who wear scents. I start vomiting. I have migraines, and my private area swells up something awful. I'm not being difficult. I just believe that no one should be allowed to wear perfume, aftershave, scented deodorant, or hairspray in public. Is that unreasonable?" *(Canadian National Post, 19/4/00. Spotter: Bronwyn Eyre)*

—o—

"From our observations, it appears that the car being driven by Kyoichi Kobara collided with an unmanned truck at about 2am on Sunday, and bounced into a ditch," reported a police spokesman from Chiba Prefecture, Kisarazu. "Officers reached the car at 4.51am, and found Kobara still trapped inside. He was semi-conscious, as was his passenger, Naoyuki Asakura. The officers broke into the car and, having rescued both motorists, laid them down by the side of the road, where they were both immediately run over, flattened, and killed outright by another car. We are satisfied that all police procedures were correctly followed at all times. The case is now closed." (The Japan Times, 3/7/00. Spotter: Matt Plesch)

—o—

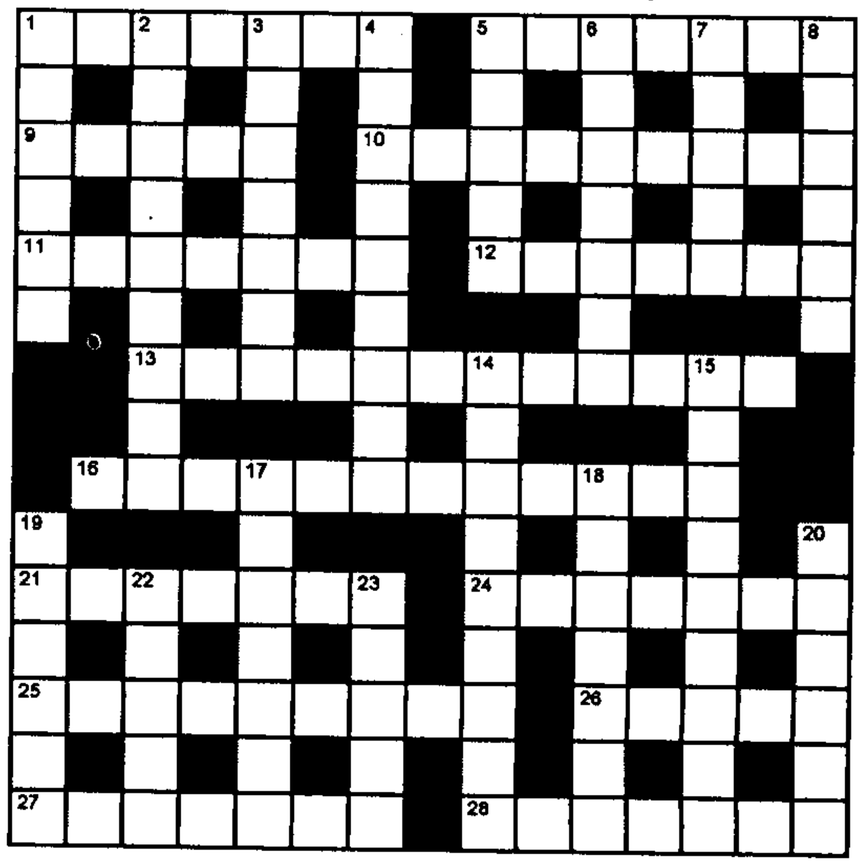
"It was a very strange incident," Star Seko told reporters gathered in the Chartered Club in New Plymouth, New Zealand. "I was playing pool and I didn't hear anything. There was no screaming. Everything was normal. The man was just sitting there quietly at his table, drinking his beer. But as I walked round behind him to play my next shot, I suddenly noticed that a knife handle was sticking out of his back. So I went closer, and that's when I saw that blood was pouring down his jacket."

Bar manager Merv Whittle also described what took place. "It was unbelievable, just like a silent movie. There was no confrontation at all, and nobody saw the stabbing take place. At first I thought it must be a joke knife, because the man didn't seem aware that he'd been stabbed, even after I told him. He just kept on drinking, until I got a mirror and showed him the knife in his back. I told him 'if you think this is a joke, it's not!', and when he saw the blood, he turned white and fainted. While we were waiting for the police and the ambulance to come, I noticed another man standing a few tables away, laughing uproariously to himself and glancing over at the table. When the police arrived, he came over and tried to reclaim the knife. That's when they arrested him, I think."

A spokesman for the Taranaki Base Hospital later stated that the knife wound had missed all the vital organs, and that the patient was in a critical but stable condition, having received a blood transfusion. Police confirmed that a man had been arrested and charged with grievous bodily harm. *(The Dominion [Wellington] 4/7/00. Spotter: Simon Pleasant)*

EYE CROSSWORD 162

by Cyclops — *£100 prize*



ACROSS

1 All-inclusive payment — accepted politicians accepted between fifty and a thousand (4,3)
5 Put down — Clinton's led to a marked habit of Monica (7)
9 Utter "balls", perhaps? (5)
10 The latest exposure of a member viewers might find intrusive (9)
11 Brenda as far as Brian's concerned: a joke with yen for queenliness (7)
12/22 Translation aid yields "Got an erection on time, thanks to Mick Jagger" (7,5)
13 The volume of Blair and co's self-congratulatory appraisement (6,6)
16 MP ('a dear') makes off with retiring parliamentarian (5,7)
21 To do the dirty on a fellow luvvie, raise leg (7)
24 Tragic character steeped in stevedore's testosterone (7)
25 Join the other side with sexually ambivalent type — grand to be a huge success (2,4,3)
26 Seasonal deliveryman's somewhat unpleasant attitude (5)
27 Suited doctor to have seeds spilt (7)
28 Eccentric scrotum? (7)

DOWN

1 Stand-ins see scum everywhere (6)
2 Spanish boy enters Spanish girl in the grass (9)
3 Stone's mad about model politely raised in Texas (7)
4 Millionaire's ready to put on pants (9)
5 Inexperienced hack given rise by Scottish politician (5)
6 Swells getting Queen drink (5,2)
7 Roger or Ray (5)
8 Brown squeezes her rotten for capital (6)
14 Rush Dick to supply an instrument (4-5)
15 IRA turn out with Paisley — new departure, a novel state! (9)
17 Play one forced on American (7)
18 Ken's broadcast fixed by parliament (7)
19 Gets underground gang leader in the sack — must be tapped! (6)
20 All that's left of English country (6)
22 (see 12)
23 Those people briefly needing space for bloomers get implant (5)

£100 prize to first solution opened on 4.8.00. Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN.

Solution to Crossword No. 161

Winner: MATTHEW BINGHAM

ACROSS: 8 Smart card 9 Virgo 10 Brill 11 Inebriate 12/13 Gender-bender 13 (see 12) 16 Attract 18 Oedipus 20+22 Fingerprints 22 (see 20) 26 Ritz Hotel 27 Crypt 28 Trews 29 Sassenach.

DOWN: 1 Faking it 2 Stalin 3 Manifesto 4 Admen 5 Overhead 6 Errand 7 Voyeurism 8 Subs 14 Half-truth 15 Hour-glass 17 Amethyst 19 Pussy-cat 21 Nutter 23 Necked 24 Stasi 25 Itch.

NOOSE OF THE WORLD

NAMED AND SHAMED

by Lynchtime O'Noose

THIS evil woman is responsible for an act of indescribable sickness and grotesque cynicism which must shock the entire nation. She is Rebekah Wade of Pennington Street, Wapping, a foul-minded editor psychiatrists say can never be cured of her vile tendencies.

She *will* offend again, whatever the do-gooders may say.

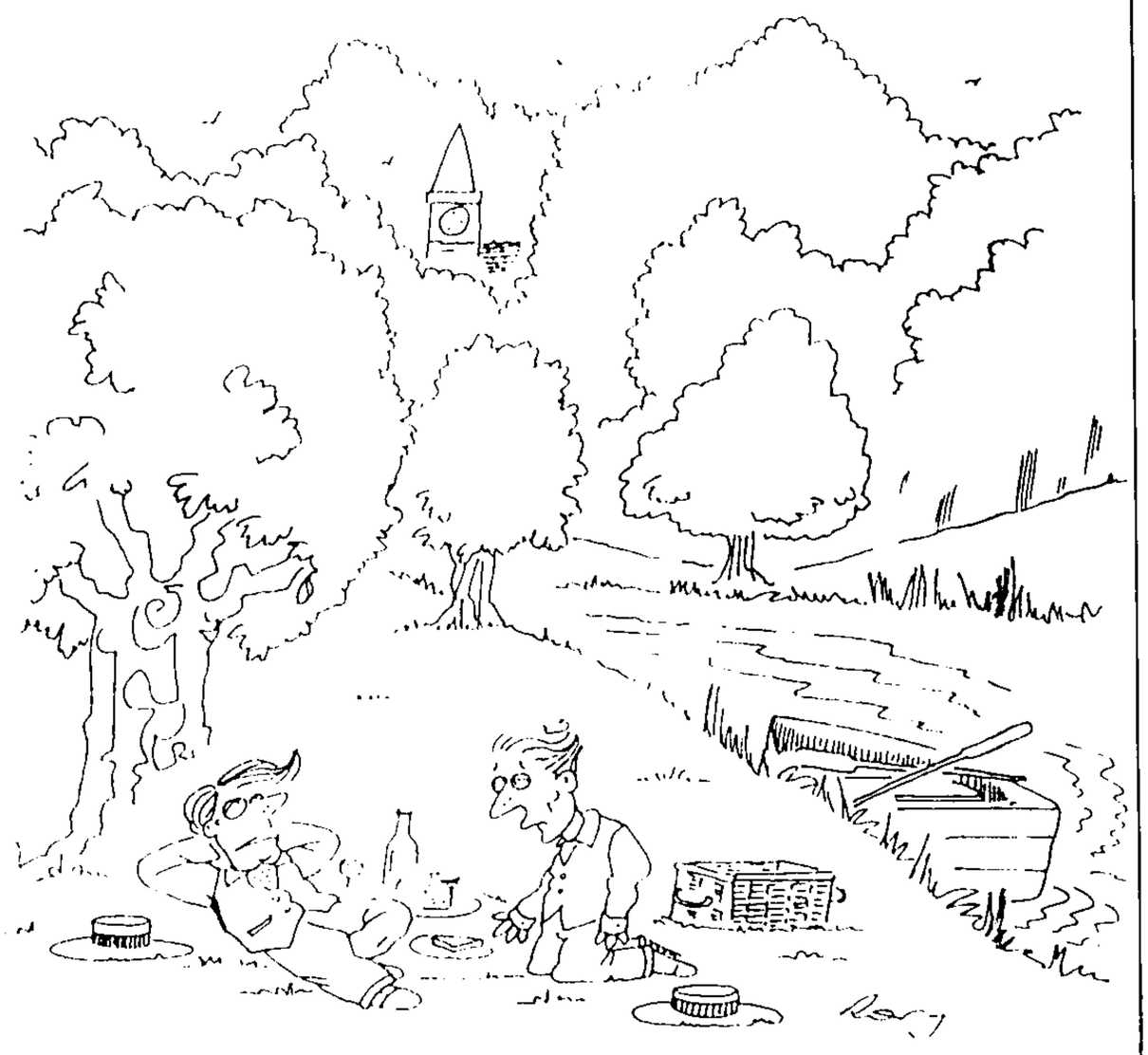
We publish her name only in the interests of protecting her innocent readers, many of them vulnerable morons with the mental age of a toddler. It is our duty because Rebekah Wade is not acting alone – she is part of a seedy ring of filth merchants and peddlars of pornography who are controlled by Mr Big, known only as Rupert Murdoch, who runs his evil empire from a sleazy backroom in London's criminal East End.

We strongly urge readers not to go out and string these people up, even though they would be perfectly justified in ridding the world of these sickos. No, we have plenty of rope in our office, but we urge readers *not* to come and collect their *free* hanging rope.

And although we are offering a free fortnight's holiday in sexy Ibiza for the first lynching by our readers, we strongly advise them *not* to have a go.

The Noose of the World is a responsible paper which is why we say "**Leave** justice to the forces of Law and Order – unless you don't feel they are doing a good job, in which case string up the perverts yourself."

More pictures of the faces of evil pp. 2-94.



"Stands the church clock at ten to three?
And is there marching still at Drumcree?"

DOME GREETS MILLIONTH VISITOR

A SMILING Mr P-Y Gerbil today welcomed the Millennium Dome's millionth visitor in the shape of Bailiff "Big Ron" Simmons of Simmons and Simmons.

Said Mr Simmons, "I have had a very enjoyable day looking around at the assets, but there is nothing here of any value."

Said Dome supremo Mr Gerbil, "This is a landmark in the history of the Dome and proof that we are still popular. We are expecting many more bailiffs in the next few weeks and shortly hope to welcome the official receiver himself."

Late News

MAZE PRISON TO BECOME ULSTER'S TATE MODERN

The empty Maze prison is to be redeveloped as "a cathedral of cool", said Northern Ireland Minister, Peter O'Mandelson. "Now that we have released all the prisoners that we've just put in there, it will make a superb setting for the contemporary artists of ***(cont. p. 94)***

STRAW 'NOT RESPONSIBLE' FOR CRIME FIGURES

by Our Crime Staff **Speedy James**

CRIME figures of 103% up were recorded by police last night, but the Home Secretary denied that they were anything to do with him.

"I was not behind my desk at the time," he told Inspector Knacker. "I was asleep and someone else must take the blame."

Said Knacker of the Yard, "We cannot hold the Home Secretary responsible for these terrible figures. Just because it is his department does not mean that he was in control.

He was taking a back seat and leaving the driving to a junior minister who must be held responsible and sacked in the next Cabinet reshuffle."

100 GLORIOUS MILES AN HOUR

STRAW'S TRIBUTE TO THE QUEEN MOTHER

ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev. A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Hullo!

Or at least "hullo" to those of you who haven't already read a draft version of this letter in "leaked" form among your e-mails!

You know, it's not very nice, is it, to think that everything you do or say in the privacy of your own vicarage is liable to be broadcast all over the parish for everyone to sneer at?!

I wonder if the person who's doing this has ever stopped to think how much distress and suffering it causes? Not just to me (after all, it's my job to "turn the other cheek"), but to all those in the parish who have been working so hard and so long to achieve all the targets that the team-ministry has been aiming for over the past three years.

You all know what I'm referring to – the two leaked items of correspondence which in recent days have appeared on the front page of the St Albion's Messenger.

Firstly, there was my top-secret and totally private memo to the steering group of the PCC under the heading "Why Aren't You Getting My Message Across?"

And, secondly, there was the reply from Mr Gould, who runs our house-groups network, headed "Because You Haven't Got A Message, You Idiot".

Mr Gould is, of course, perfectly entitled to his views and to express them in his customary forthright manner. But, as the Vicar, I am sure you will all agree that I am equally entitled to ask Mr Gould to take a very long holiday somewhere where he cannot e-mail me with his thoughts, eg, the bottom of the sea!

But, you know the really sad thing about all the ridiculous fuss which has been made about these two trivial little parish memos is that it has diverted everyone's attention away from the real good news of the week!

I mean, of course, the fact that, after very carefully doing our sums, the parish is now in a position to give very substantial and generous sums of money to all sorts of local good causes, from our cottage hospital to St Albion's primary school.

This means that at long last we will be able to do all sorts of things you've been wanting us to do, but we haven't been able to, because Mr Brown, our Treasurer, has been so slow in geting on top of the figures. No offence, Gordon, you've been doing the best you can, but perhaps I should have been quicker to help you – only I've been rather busy lately, what with the lack of sleep and broken nights! You understand, Gordon! Or rather you don't, because for some reason you still haven't got married, let alone had children, which is odd for a person of 46. Not that I think so, Gordon, but you know what people are

like, they will say "There's no smoke without fire" (*Proverbs*, 7.4).

Mr Brown has rightly been credited for being the one who had the chance to announce all our new spending plans. But let us not lose sight of whose money it is that Gordon is giving away. It's not his money, is it? It is the parish's money. And, as the vicar of this parish, the money could be said to be mine and mine alone!

And now, Cherie and I are taking a well-earned holiday in Tuscany with our old friend Prince Fribi. As usual, I am leaving Mr Prescott in charge of the day-to-day running of the parish. But if anything important crops up, Mr Campbell knows where to find me!

Arrivederci!

Toni

Text of The Week

"They toil not, neither do they spin. Yet they remain very popular and get their message across!"

(Letter to the Philipgouldians).

I think there's a lesson for us all here!

T.B.

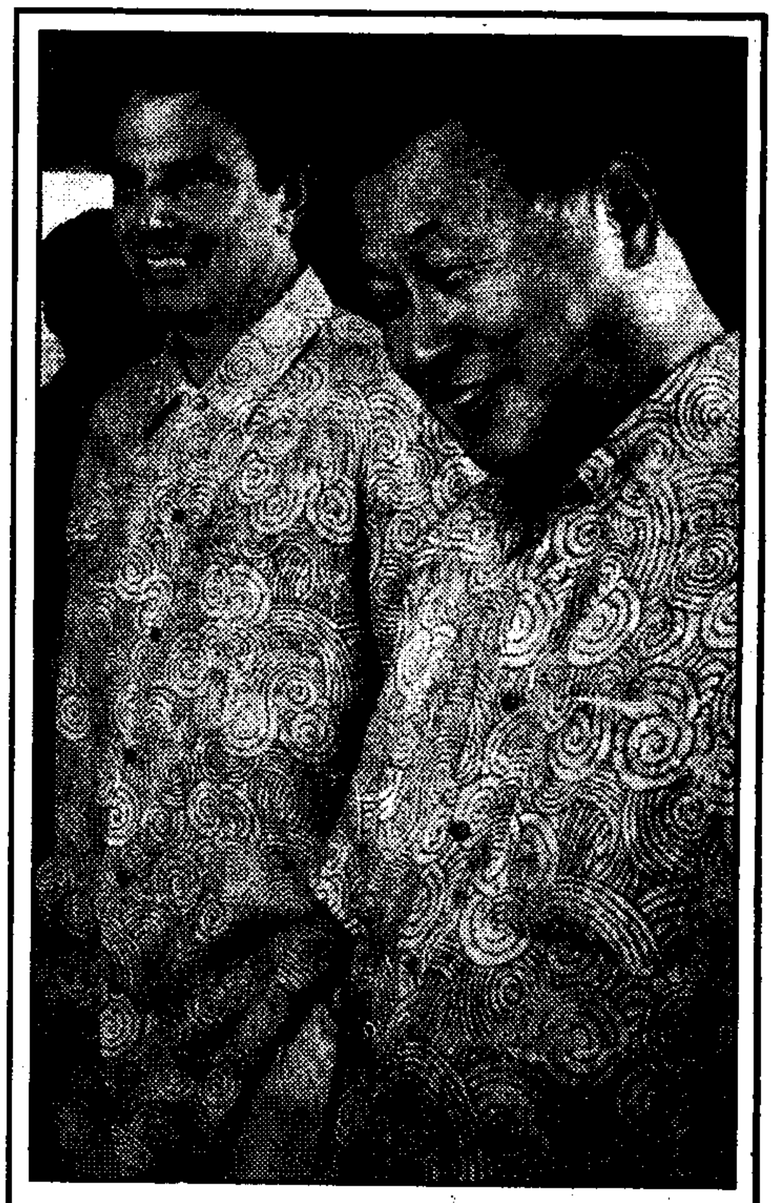
£ PARISH GIVING £

Where The Benefits Will Go

- New part-time music teacher (Tuesday mornings) for St Albion's Primary School
- New bus-stop outside vicarage with all-weather shelter
- Registered osteopath to visit cottage hospital (Fridays)
- Extension of parish bicycle lane network to include cemetery and youth club

HURRY!HURRY!HURRY!HURRY!

Copies of the **St Albion's Parish Annual Report** (with foreword by the Vicar) are still available from Tesco's, at the bargain price of £2.99 for 1000. If you want to find out what's really going on in the parish, read Mr Campbell's independent account of how well we have done this year! Remember, out of 177 promises, Tony and the team have managed to keep 178! Not bad, eh!



SAYONARA!

That's "hi!" in Japanese! And here's a snap of yours truly getting shirty(!) on behalf of the poor and needy in the Third World. At a big Ecumenical conference with all the other world spiritual leaders, we all agreed that something should be done about the poor! So that's good news for the starving! Now I'm off to a big lunch to celebrate our achievement!

Sayonara, which also means "Bye"!

T.B.

Millennium Tent Update

Message from J-Y Gerbil, Grand Supremo de Tente

Bonjour, mes amis!

Et j'ai très bonnes nouvelles!

Pour les school vacances, nous avons thought up beacoup de nouveau attractions!

1. Continuous showing d'un video de la Pageant Centennaire pour la Queen Mother.

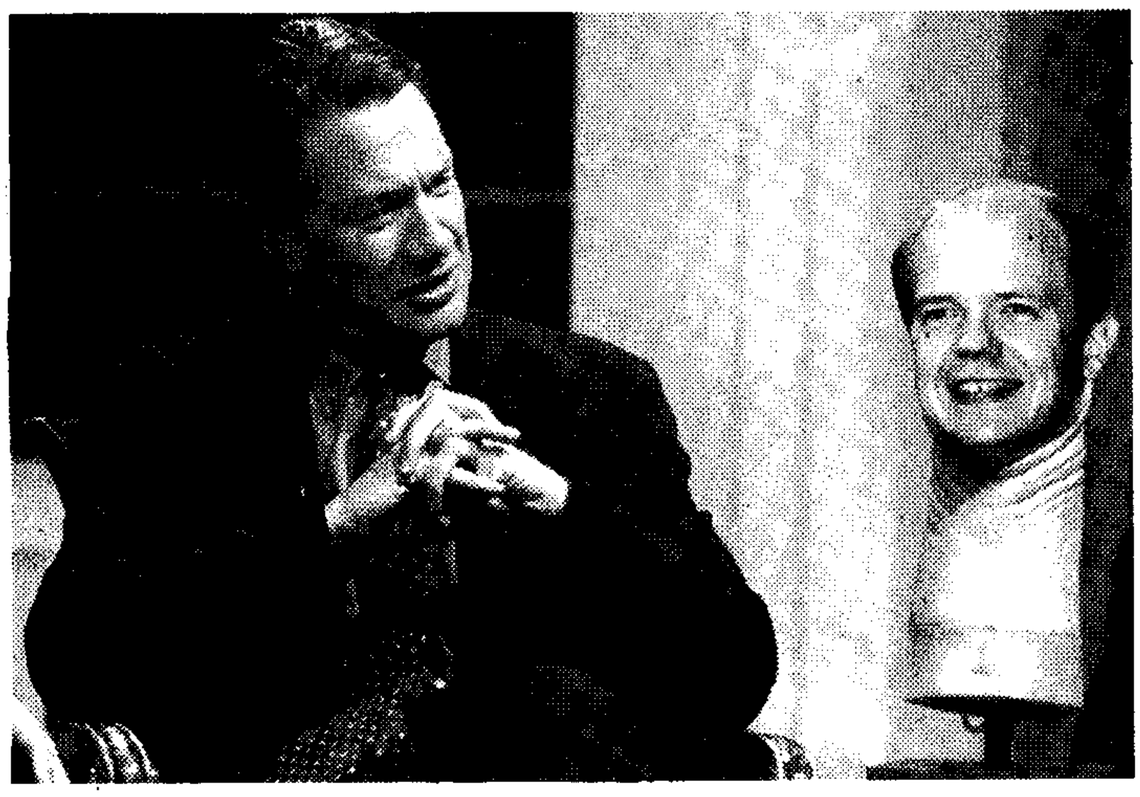
2. Exposition des mobile phones (merci à nos amis de Vodaphone).

3. Le Grand Morris-Dancing! Festival de dance folklorique d'Angleterre! Oubliez le Salsa! Maintenant, c'est les Morrismen de Hemel Hempstead. Admission totalement libre!

Ne soyez pas un sheep! (Merci à M. Saatchi pour cet brilliant slogan!)

J-Y G.

"Mary tells me you've agreed to look after our pets while we're on holiday..."



PORTILLO MEETS PUPPET

THERE was a great deal of hilarity for both viewers, as Michael Portillo was confronted with his puppet on Sunday morning's edition of "Breakfast With Frost".

The puppet, known as William Hague, is a woefully unrealistic caricature of a leader of a British political party fashioned from discarded pieces of John Major and Mrs Thacher.

"He's easy to manipulate," said Mr Portillo. "All I do is apply a bit of pressure here, make him do a u-turn on tax and he has the whole country in fits of laughter."

POETRY CORNER

In Memoriam Jack Berni, Restaurateur

So. Farewell
Then
Jack Berni.

Creator of
The famous
Berni Inn.

Keith's mum
Took Keith and
Me to one
For a treat
Once.

We had
Prawn cocktail
Steak.
And then
Blackforest
Gateau.

I do not
Remember what
Keith's Mum
had.

It was
All a long
Time
Ago.

E.J. Thribb (17½)

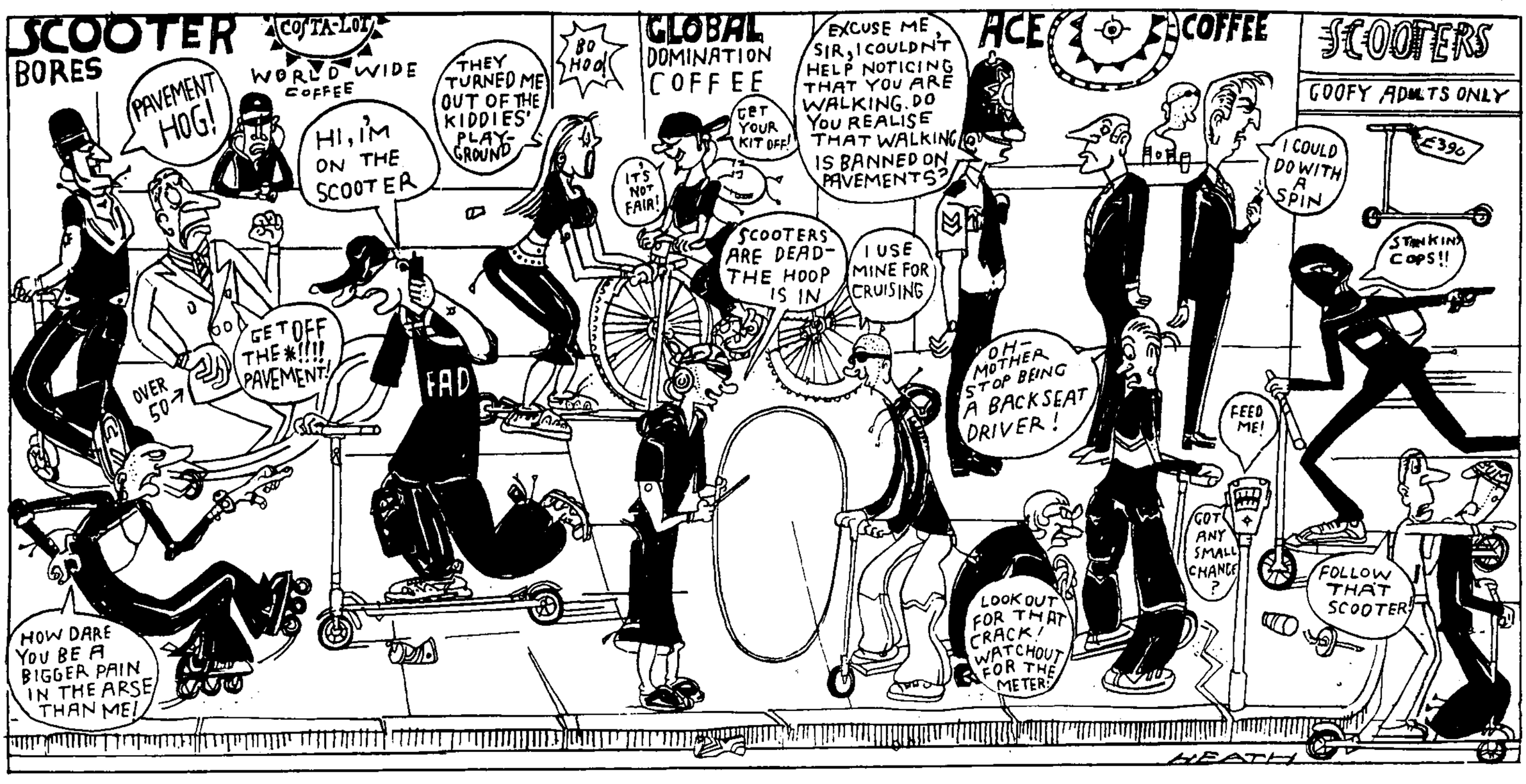
CHILD NOT MURDERED SHOCK

by **Our Entire Staff**

THE country was rocked to its foundations last night when police revealed that a small child had been playing outside for five minutes without being abducted, assaulted and murdered by paedophiles.

A spokesman for the police said, "This is a very rare occurrence and there is no cause for panic. We shall do everything *(cont. 2094)*

HEATH'S PRIVATE VIEW


SCOOTER BORES
COSTA-LOT WORLD WIDE COFFEE
PAVEMENT HOG!
HI, I'M ON THE SCOOTER
THEY TURNED ME OUT OF THE KIDDIES' PLAY-GROUND
BO HOO!
GLOBAL DOMINATION COFFEE
GET YOUR KIT OFF!
IT'S NOT FAIR!
EXCUSE ME SIR, I COULDN'T HELP NOTICING THAT YOU ARE WALKING. DO YOU REALISE THAT WALKING IS BANNED ON PAVEMENTS?
SCOOTERS ARE DEAD- THE HOOP IS IN
I USE MINE FOR CRUISING
ACE COFFEE
OH- MOTHER STOP BEING A BACKSEAT DRIVER!
SCOOTERS
GOOFY ADULTS ONLY
I COULD DO WITH A SPIN
£396
STINKIN' COPS!!
OVER 50
GET OFF THE *!!!! PAVEMENT!
FAD
HOW DARE YOU BE A BIGGER PAIN IN THE ARSE THAN ME!
FEED ME!
GOT ANY SMALL CHANGE?
FOLLOW THAT SCOOTER!
LOOK OUT FOR THAT CRACK! WATCHOUT FOR THE METER!
HEATH

BLAIR ROCKED BY NEW LEAK

by Our Leak Staff **Memo Mowlam**

THE ENTIRE world was rocked to its foundations yesterday by yet another devastating leak from the heart of 10, Downing Street.

In the past few weeks, there has been a seemingly never-ending succession of leaked documents from the nerve centre of government, each one further eroding the prime minister's authority.

But the latest bombshell is the most damaging yet, which many predict will be the final nail in the coffin of the New Labour project.

Shock-a-Leakie

For this is not ordinary, run-of-the-mill interdepartmental e-mail. It is nothing less than a top-level, top-secret internal memo written by Tony Blair to himself.

By printing its contents, we recognise that we may be endangering the entire future of life on this planet.

But it is our moral duty as journalists to fill up our papers in a thin week.

When we confronted Downing Street with this latest example of the rot that is now pervading every nook and cranny of the government machine they said, "We are not going to comment on such pathetic and trivial tittle-tattle. We are going to concentrate on the real business of government, which is to track down the bastards who leaked this and really get them."

More Leaks: pp. 1-84.

That Blair Memo To Himself In Full

10 Downing Street
London SW1

Dear Prime Minister,

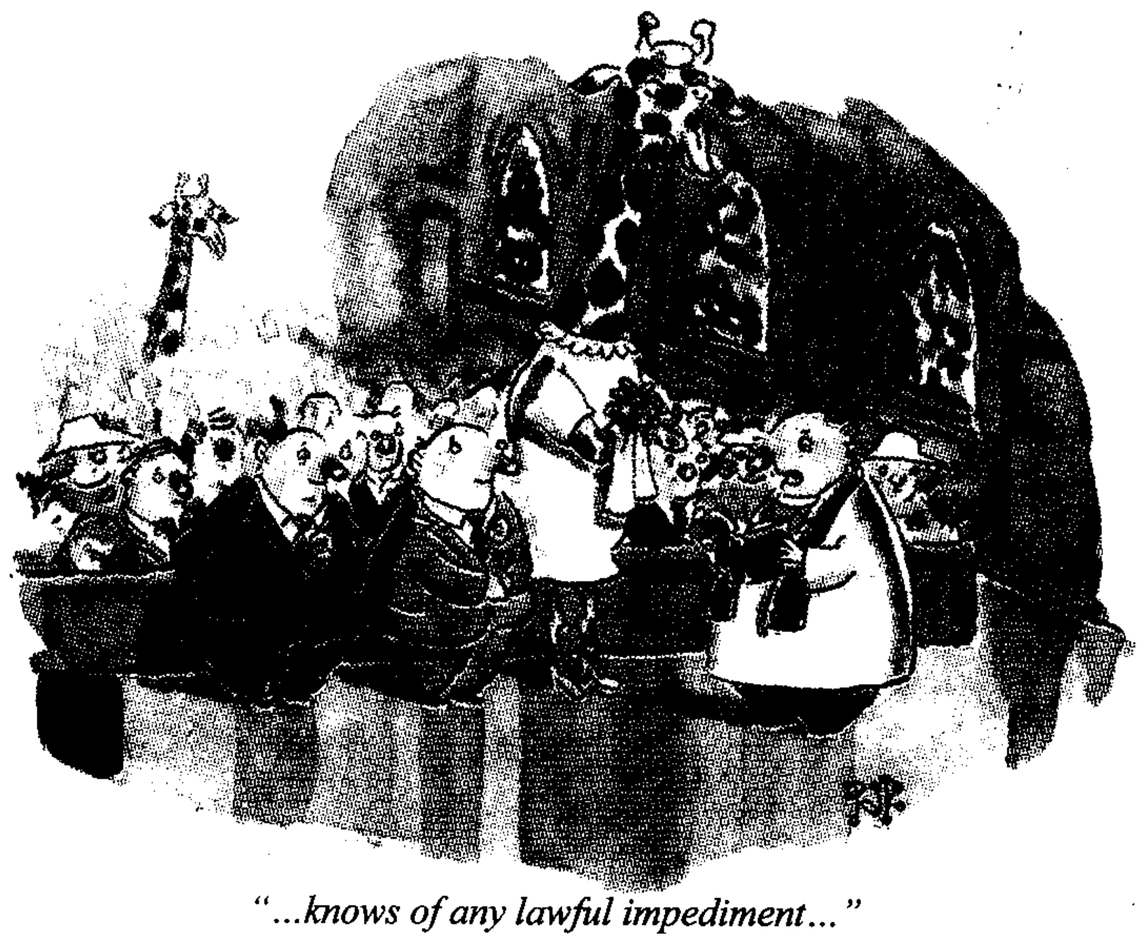
Let's face it, you've lost it! No wonder your lead is slipping away. You've got no ideas, no principles, no policies. All you and your cronies are interested in is presentation, presentation, presentation. And you can't even do that. Even William Hague's got more charisma than you these days. It's no good you going on Question Time trying to make excuses and win people's sympathy. Face it, Tony, people just don't like you any more. They've sussed you out. They hate the Dome and they hate you. And, frankly, so do I.

Yours,

Tony

Tony Blair

cc. Only to the Prime Minister.



"...knows of any lawful impediment..."

POLLY FILLER is off sunning herself in faraway Tuscany (lucky her!), so yours truly has been asked to step into the breach.

And if you're expecting a sideways look at domestic life from a woman's point of view, you're going to be seriously disappointed. That's Polly's patch and you won't catch me trespassing on it!

So, there I was sitting watching the Tweenies with my toddler Ivan (the terrible, as he's known in the Day-Relief household!!) when the phone rang and the features editor asked me to stand in for Polly.

"OK," I said. "I'll do it so long as I can get my hopeless partner Stephen to look after Ivan for half an hour."

Unfortunately, the aforementioned hopeless Stephen was too busy surfing the net hoping to catch a glimpse of the ex-nun on the toilet on the Big Brother website, so I had to leave Ivan with the Kurdish au-pair.

She speaks no English (of course!) and can't even stop Ivan throwing Chicken Run Pasta Shapes at her face! Talk about zero childcare skills!

So I have to admit to being somewhat distracted while I type out these words – and if they arrive covered in tomato suce, you can blame the feeble Azmal!! You'd think, by the way, a 16-year-old refugee would be grateful to join a friendly family with a charming toddler and brush-up on her ironing skills, but oh no, she prefers to cry all the time and phone home once a month!!!

As if that wasn't enough, I've just given up smoking! And I'm on a diet! And I'm pregnant! And I'm writing a novel. But more of that next time!

Polly Filler is on holiday.

Media Latest

A REVOLUTION in independent television was heralded today as the Government gave the go-ahead for regional ITV companies to merge with each other.

"This will make a huge difference to viewers," said a clearly delighted executive counting his share options, "as instead of lots of smaller companies making cheap and nasty programmes of a lamentably low quality, there'll be one big company making cheap and nasty programmes of a lamentably low quality."

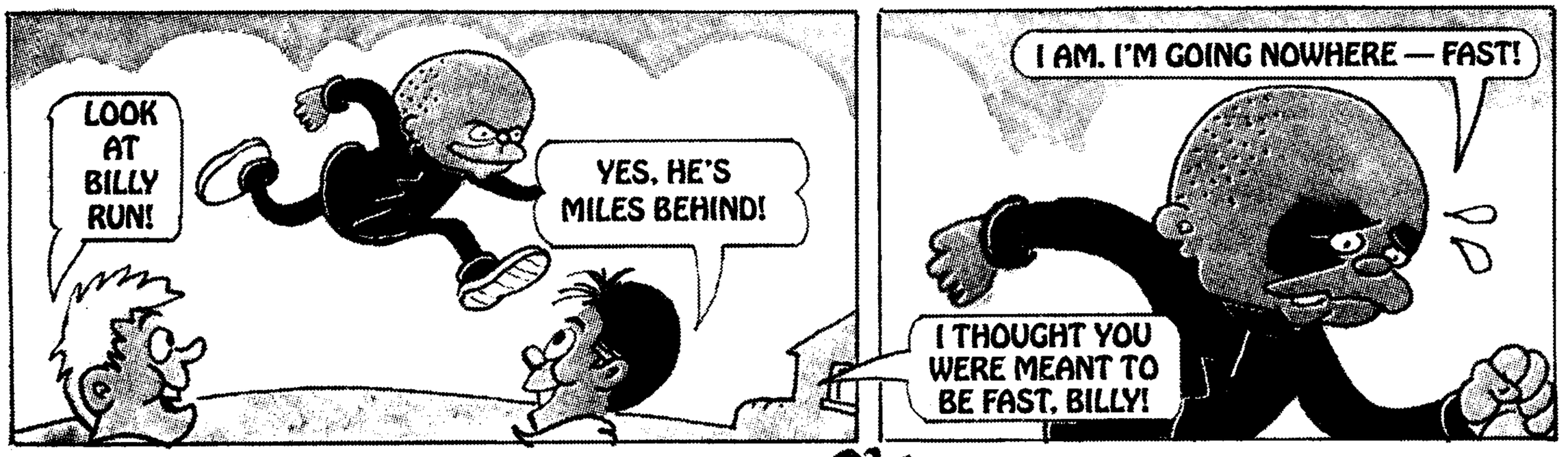
Chris Smith is 100 (per cent entitled to sit on the board of an ITV company when he quits politics).

THE BEANO

BORIS the MENACE

WATCH THIS, READERS! I'M GOING TO USE MY COMIC TO HAVE SOME FUN WITH MR BLAIR! HA! HA! HA!
SPEC
PUFF!
PTING!
OW!
YIKES!
FOR MY NEXT TRICK, CHUMS, I'M GOING TO MAKE A REAL STINK! CHORTLE! SNIGGER!
10
POOH! WHIFF! WHO THREW A DAILY TELEGRAPH IN HERE?
AND NOW — MY BEST WHEEZE OF ALL! I'M GOING TO RUN FOR PARLIAMENT AND DENOUNCE MR BLAIR'S POLICIES ON EUROPEAN MONETARY UNION! SMIRK! SMIRK!
VOTE 4 BORIS BEANO
WHY YOU...!
GRR! I'LL TEACH YOU TO MAKE A FOOL OF ME, BORIS!
TIME FOR THE TRUSTY 'COMIC DOWN THE BACK OF THE SHORTS' ROUTINE, PALS!
HERE'S A 'SWING' YOU WON'T LIKE!
OWW! YAROO! THE SPECTATOR'S TOO THIN TO HELP! CRIPES! LUMMEE! ETC. ETC.

BILLY THE 'SWIZZ'



PLUS ON OTHER PAGES

MICHAEL the MINX

LET'S PLAY FOLLOW THE LEADER — ME!

ANNIE THE TERRIBLE

LOCK 'EM UP, EH, PALS!

JK

'QUEEN MUM WON'T SPOIL OUR DAY' say IRA Men

by Our Royal Staff
Jenny Bombed

ONE OF the most colourful and ancient ceremonies in the history of these islands, the "Planting of the Bombs", went on uninterrupted yesterday, despite threats by the Queen Mother to stage a "birthday party" in the middle of London.

As the sun shone down from a cloudless sky, vast crowds gathered round London's railway and tube stations, hoping to catch a glimpse of a train.

Ealing Tragedy

But nothing could deter the gallant men of the 7th/12th Omagh and Inniskillen Bombardiers (London Brigade) as, dressed in their full traditional uniform of balaclavas, dark jackets and boots, they re-enacted the age-old ceremonies of "Placing the Semtex" and "Causing the Chaos".

It was all performed with perfect timing, even though the Queen Mother had issued a warning that she intended to interrupt their proceedings by mounting a "spectacular", involving women, children and Norman Wisdom.

Wrong Type Of Bomb On Line

A spokesman for the "I Can't Believe It's Not The IRA" said last night, "It was a great day for us, and we're all delighted that it went off with a bang. Unfortunately, no one was hurt."

GEORGE BEST SHOCK WARNING

by Lord 'Alco' Hollick

PUBLICANS last night made a dramatic plea to newspaper editors saying, "Do not give George Best any more publicity – it will kill him."

George Best is addicted to publicity and has fought a lifetime battle to stop appearing on the front page of the papers.

Recently, experts had hoped that Best had conquered his attention-seeking problem, and he had not appeared in a tabloid for several weeks.

But then last weekend Best suffered a relapse and was seen in the Sun. He then went on a red-top binge which ended up with Best lying in the gutter press.

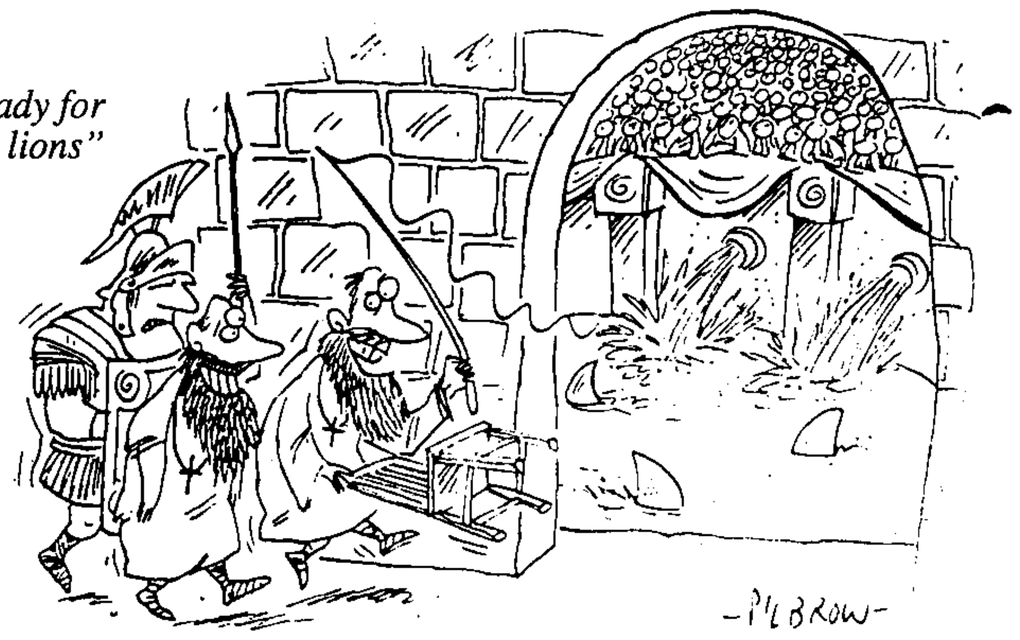
Pint of Best

Said a leading politician, "He has no will-power. He just can't keep out of the newspapers. It is up to pressmen to take responsibility and stop filling up their pages with huge quantities of booze stories."

However, the Editor of The Rising Sun hit back at the publicans' claims saying, "If Best appears in my paper with his wife wearing a mini-skirt, it is hardly my fault if I give him a big splash."

He continued, "If Best kills himself it will be very sad, particularly if other newspapers get the story first."

George Best is 110 proof.



"I'm ready for those lions"

EXCLUSIVE TO THE OBSERVER

Is This The World's Most Evil Woman?

by Antonia Holden
(author of 'The Prince Charles I Never Knew' and 'Was Shakespeare A Writer?')

TO THE OUTSIDE world she is a benign, smiling old lady in a flowery hat, waving graciously to the adoring crowds.

But few people, apart from myself, are aware that this gentle granny in the long white gloves is perhaps the most machiavellian figure in the whole of twentieth century history.

For years, historians have claimed that the Queen Mother was a reluctant Queen, who only took the throne when there was no option, following the abdication of Edward VIII.

But hitherto undiscovered papers, so secret that even I have not seen them, reveal:

- The Queen Mother personally forced the Duke of Windsor to abdicate by blackmailing him with compromising photographs of him and Noel Coward in a gay bar in Berlin.
- The Queen Mother then forced her husband to be king, making George VI so terrified of her that he became a compulsive smoker and died a premature death at the age of 31. Furthermore, he developed a serious speech impediment whenever she came into the room.
- The Queen Mother signed a secret treaty with Hitler, offering him the British throne if she could be his queen.
- The Queen Mother forced her daughter to marry the Duke of Edinburgh in 1947 against her will, in order to forge a dynastic alliance with the fascist regime of the Greek colonels.
- The Queen Mother was seen driving a white Fiat Uno through the streets of Paris on the fateful night of August 31st 1997.

All this, in my view, goes to prove that no more loathesome figure has ever disgraced the pages of the Observer. *(Surely history? Ed.)*

YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS — BY BIRCH

Tracey? It's Sophie. Congratulations on selling 'My Bed' to Saatchi, girl! Fancy a night on the tiles in Hoxton?
She's too busy working on the flatpack version for Ikea...

Beijing Zoo
北京动物园
Pandas and other miserable animals in cages.

Beijing This Month

The Genius of Beethoven includes:
♪ The ground-breaking *3rd* or *Erotica Symphony*, once dedicated to Napoleon!

Advertisement

The National Criminal Intelligence Service is committed to a policy of equal opportunities. Applications are welcome from candidates regardless of ethnic origin, religious belief, gender, sexual orientation or any other irrelevant factor.

National Criminal Intelligence Service

100 YEARS OF QUEEN MOTHER CELEBRATIONS

by Our Royal Staff PHIL SPACE

EXACTLY one hundred years ago, Britain began celebrating the Queen Mother's centenary.

It barely seems possible that the Queen Mum's birthday has gone on for so long.

But it is true. It all began with a simple church service, leading onto a fly-past and a pageant, a tattoo, a family party, another fly-past, an unofficial celebration, an official celebration, Vera Lynne, Charlotte Church... And a hundred years on this remarkable catalogue of events is still going strong.

And the most amazing thing is how much Britain has changed since the Queen Mother's birthday celebrations began!

Way back then the Labour Government was still popular. The silver scooter had not been invented. England was hotly tipped to win Euro 2000. And Vanessa Feltz was still over 20 stone.

The Queen Mother can look back at an extraordinary century of tributes and her loyal admirers can look forward to another hundred years of *(That's enough. Ed.)*

OLD HAT Lines on the Queen Mother's 100th Birthday

My poem about your birthday
Is like a fete
With lots of floats
Covering every decade of
Your long and eventful
Life.

Starting with your childhood
At the turn of the century
Long ago in Scotland
Granite castle walls,
Midges in the evening,
Whisky for breakfast.

Then the 1920s.
Flappers, the Charleston
The Beatles and the
Miniskirt.
Everyone had fun until
The Depression brought an
End to the merry-making.

The 1930s were difficult
For you. The war clouds
Loomed ever ominous in the
sky and then there was the
Abdication.
Your stammering husband
became King.
Something you had not
expected.

In the 1940s the sirens were
all going off
And bombs were falling like
Bombs from the ominous sky.
But you were unafraid
Going to the East End with
Winston Churchill and wearing
One of your many hats.

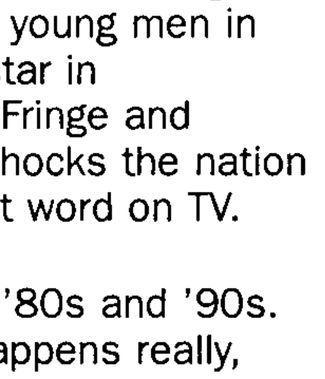
The 1950s mean
Widowhood and your husband
dies. A victim of smoking
Long before the risks had
Been properly understood.

And your daughter is
Crowned amidst the peal of
Royal Bells. Mount Everest is
conquered and Britain
welcomes the first-ever
washing machine.
Norman Wisdom stars in
British films as the Cheeky
Chappy and rationing ends
At last.

The 1960s – the coming of
Satire – four young men in
polo-necks star in
Beyond The Fringe and
Ken Tynan shocks the nation
By using that word on TV.

The 1970s, '80s and '90s.
Not much happens really,
Although you get a lot older.
Jerry Hall dresses up as a
flower, the Wombles capture
the Nation's imagination and
Andrew Motion is created
Poet Laureate in succession
to Ted Hughes.

My poem about your birthday
Is a bit like the pageant
On the television.
Except even
worse.
Will this do?



A. Motion
Poet Laureate

© The Times

EXCLUSIVE TO EYE READERS

TO COMMEMORATE the glorious and historic occasion of the 100th birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother, Gnome Britannic Enterprises is proud to offer

THE QUEEN MOTHER BAR-B-Q SET

NO PATIO will be complete without this priceless heritage item of al fresco culinary equipment, hand-crafted by South Korean metalworkers to designs by world-famous kitchen equipment designer Lord Foster.

This amazing, unique tribute to the Woman of the Century comes complete with:

- **3-setting swing-mechanism grill**
- **stainless steel kebab skewers (set of 12)**
- **1 bag self-lighting charcoal fuel briquettes**
- **1 box matches decorated with Royal swan insignia, long-connected with the Bowes-Lyon family, complete with Latin motto *"Swan Vesta, the match you can trust".***

This is no ordinary barbecue set. It is an incomparable heirloom, to be passed on to your children and your children's children for generations to come.

And all for only an incredible £568.99
(plus VAT, p&p extra)

Do not delay. Do not disappoint your family at this key moment in our nation's history.

Send now, giving full credit card details, to Gnome Queen Mum Offer, Unit 4, Nuneaton Trading Estate, PO Box 1999
(allow up to three years for delivery).

"Mind you, his ability to make me laugh soon lost its attraction"

THE SPECTATOR 28 July 2000

High Lies

Traditional values

Tacki

Those degenerate bums in the liberal press are at it again, destroying the traditional values that made this country great. What happened to standards? What happened to decency? What happened to responsibility? That's what I asked the 18-year-old blonde I was trying to bed when totally pissed out of my head at a great party chez Conrad Black last week.

What is a rich little thick boy *(Surely "poor little Greek boy?" Ed.)* to do? How can this country put up with sybaritic cokehead ex-cons sounding off about morality with no sense of how ludicrous they look? *(Is this right? Ed.)* Perhaps I'd better just mention how marvellous Conrad Black is again so I don't get the sacki.

TV – What You Didn't Watch

The Road To Riches

Presented by Sir Peter Jaybotham

Part 94: Why People Want More Money

(Man in floppy white hat seen walking towards camera on Great Wall of China)

Sir Peter Jaybotham *(for it is he)*: It was here on the Great Wall that in the fourth Millennium BC the Emperor Ban King had the idea of the world's first cash-point. It was literally a "hole in the wall"!

(Cut to Jay looking at grass-skirted dancers on Tahiti giggling inanely at his hat)

Jay: Here in the Pacific Ocean they only had grass walls, which were no good for cash-points. So they decided to use the coconut as their currency, since these could be easily obtained by shaking the branches of the local palm trees.

(Shot of coconut falling on head of Jaybotham, knocking off silly hat and rendering presenter unconscious. Cut to Jaybotham sitting in cafe outside the Colosseum with Lord Hattersley)

Jay: So much for the Emperor Diocletian. Now, Roy, you know a bit about money, having earned a lot of it in your time.

Hatterjee: Yes, indeed, Peter. Is this lunch on the BBC?

NEXT WEEK: The Great Depression, as viewers realise there are eight more programmes like this to go.

Late News

RETURN TO 'IMPERIAL MEASURES' WELCOMED

THERE was joy throughout the nation today as the Government signalled a return to Imperial measures to get its policies implemented.

"The modern democratic system has always been very over-rated," said Mr Blair. "That's why my Education Secretary chose to by-pass parliament with his plans to introduce performance-related pay for teachers, and I chose to promote unelected friends like Lord Falconer, Lord Irving and Lord Birt to key Government posts."

Even Later News

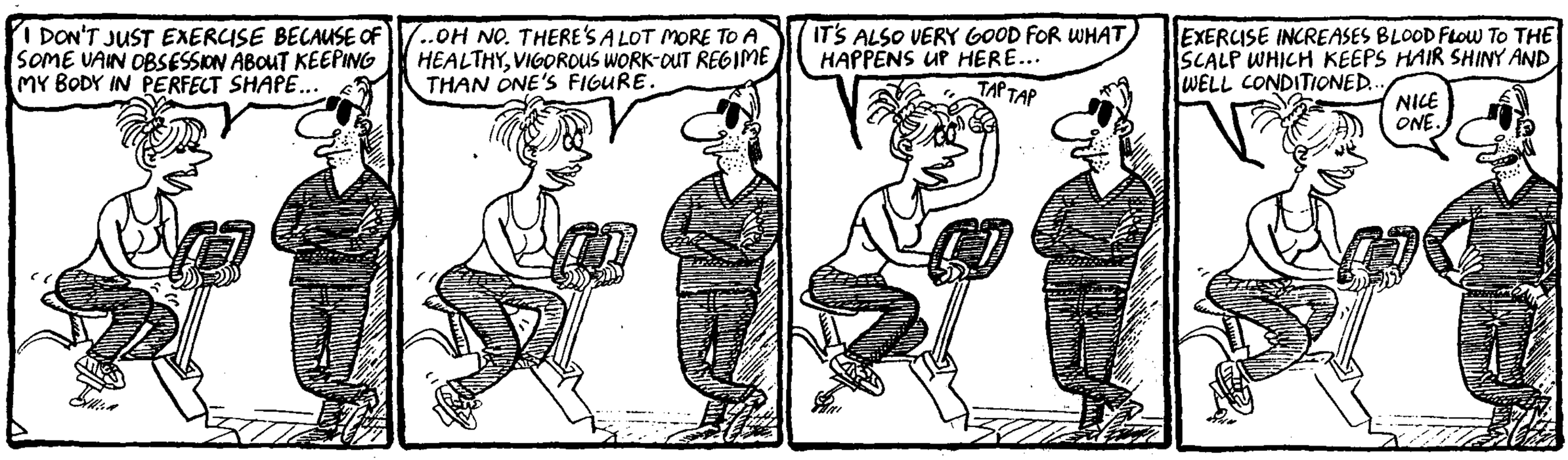
TESCO FAVOUR POUNDS

TESCO have announced that they'll be coming out in favour of the pound – a director of the superstore chain explaining, "I, for one, love the idea of the traditional British pound — pounds are very important to my way of life."

He continued, "Fellow Tesco board members and myself are very fond of the good, old-fashioned measurement of millions of pounds. You know where you stand with pounds. For instance, I hate it when I'm forced to mess around converting my salary from pounds into something foreign in order to get a better interest rate."

Celeb

LIGGER


I DON'T JUST EXERCISE BECAUSE OF SOME VAIN OBSESSION ABOUT KEEPING MY BODY IN PERFECT SHAPE...
..OH NO. THERE'S A LOT MORE TO A HEALTHY, VIGOROUS WORK-OUT REGIME THAN ONE'S FIGURE.
IT'S ALSO VERY GOOD FOR WHAT HAPPENS UP HERE...
TAP TAP
EXERCISE INCREASES BLOOD FLOW TO THE SCALP WHICH KEEPS HAIR SHINY AND WELL CONDITIONED...
NICE ONE.

Literary Review

Talking it over... and over again

Love, Etc
Julian Barnes
(Cape, £15.99)

Three anguished-looking forty-somethings sit on a north London sofa...

STUART: Hello! My name's Stuart. Stuart Hughes. We met about ten years ago. In a novel by Julian Barnes called *Talking It Over*. I'm the quiet one, whose wife went off with his best friend. *You* know.

OLIVER: Alas, can that discordant warbling coming from the adjacent watering hole be my old — as in past, previous, former, quondam — chum Stuart? Steatopygous Stu, he of the narcoleptic mien and the brow-furrowed stare? We've met, too. I mean, how could you possibly forget *me*?

GILLIAN: Gillian. I'm the one who caused all the trouble. If it was trouble, which I don't really know. I'm the thoughtful one — you know, the still centre that gets on with minding the children while these wretched men bicker over my head. What you need to know is that it's ten years later, Stuart's been in America doing very nicely for himself, I've been getting on with my picture restoring while Oliver pretends to write his film scripts. Now Stuart's come home and wants to improve everything by giving Oliver a job and setting us up in the house that he and I used to live in. What would you do? It's all done in dialogue again, by the way.

Mme WYATT: I am Gillian's mother. I am here to provide a little epigrammatic Gallic wisdom. "One is rarely forgiven for being generous." There you are.

STUART: I'm still in love with her, of course. Isn't it obvious? And the flame still burns. At least I think it does. You'll have to work out what you think about the late-night encounter in the kitchen after Oliver's gone to bed. Anyway, one or two things have changed since the first book. I mean, I'm much more successful, while Oliver's simply a layabout who sponges off his wife.

OLIVER: Hark at these audacious juxtapositions, these parti-coloured reductions of the infinitely shaded patterns of our days! Irony, badinage – all this is to sad Stu as water gushing over the hindquarters of the average *canard*. As if the ability to shunt a few mouldy vegetables around the genteeler purlieus of Stoke Newington could be described as "success".

GILLIAN: Oh dear, it's just the same as before, isn't it? Truth being relative and all that. Only now we're middle-aged it's all a bit nastier. I mean, Oliver's had a breakdown and I end up getting pregnant, but by Stuart. Excuse me, I've got to put the children to bed.

Mme WYATT: *Après moi le deluge!*

STUART: I suppose the thing that bothers me is that I don't have a life of my own. I mean, I've read a few novels — I'm not quite as stupid as I sound — and the point about them — the best ones, anyway — is that the characters in them have lives of their own. They do, though. They don't just behave in character all the time, so that you always know what they're going to do and say. Some clichés are true. There you are — I've done it again.

OLIVER: Lawks! Did you ever hear such low-brow persiflage, such dimwit idiocy from the seamier end of life's slushpile? What a novel needs, as Mr Barnes — I doff my *chapeau* to this deft manipulator of existence's grimy clay — so sapiently observes, is "a sense of form, content, discrimination, selection, omission, arrangement, emphasis..." And by the way, Gillian doesn't welcome his nocturnal advances. So there!

GILLIAN: No, I suppose not. In fact, very much not. Actually I'm just a bit tired of this. I mean, I got quite interested in all the stuff about me, Stuart and Oliver — I mean, who wouldn't? — but then there's all this other stuff about life and art and so on and, well, it was time to take Sophie to music.

STUART: You can't put life down like you can put a book down, can you? It just goes by and there's nothing you can do about it. Does that sound obvious? I'm sorry, but that's the kind of thing Julian Barnes makes me say.

NEW GRUB STREET

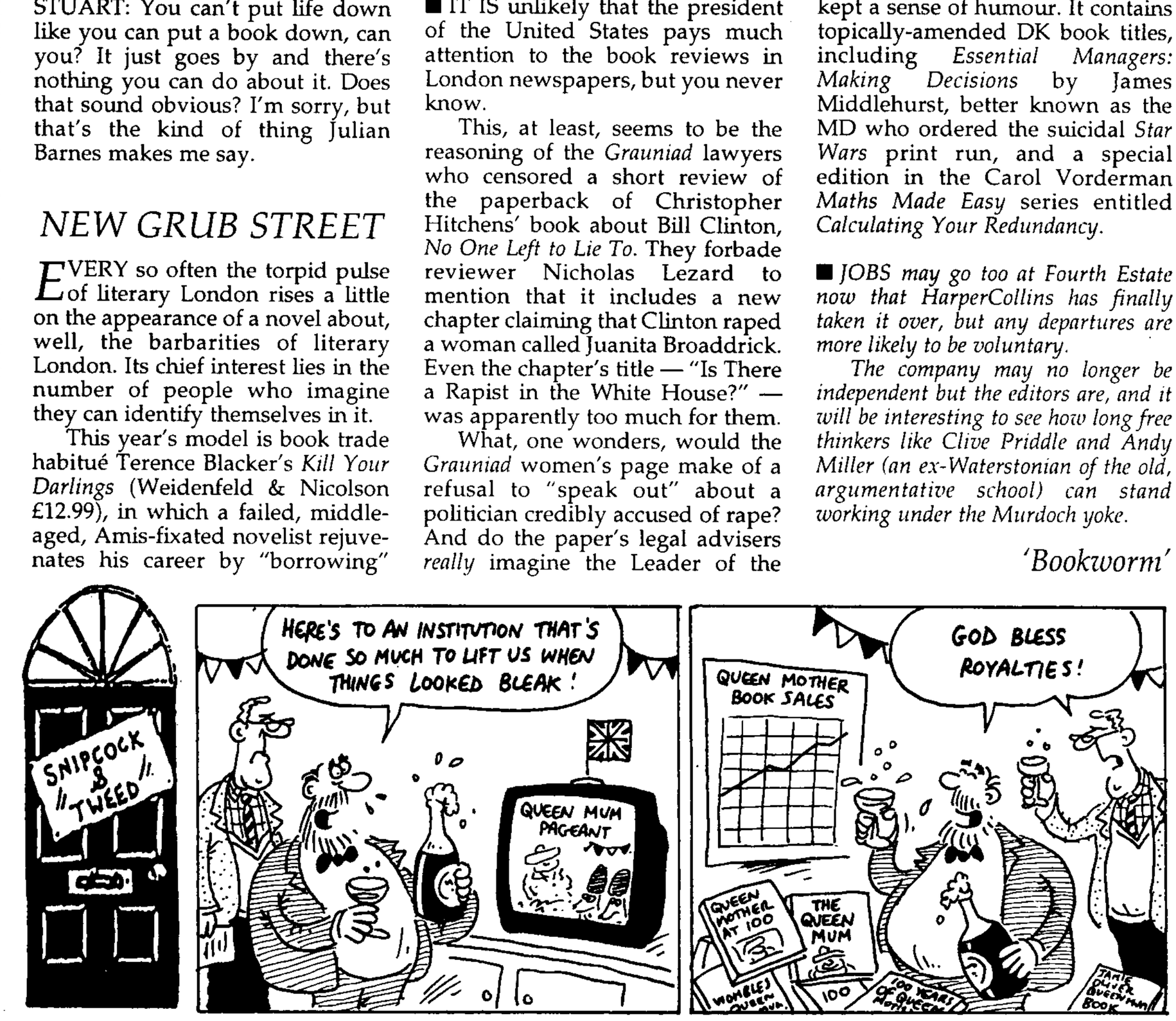
EVERY so often the torpid pulse of literary London rises a little on the appearance of a novel about, well, the barbarities of literary London. Its chief interest lies in the number of people who imagine they can identify themselves in it.

This year's model is book trade habitué Terence Blacker's *Kill Your Darlings* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson £12.99), in which a failed, middle-aged, Amis-fixated novelist rejuvenates his career by "borrowing" from the work of his suicide-casualty protégé.

All the customary signposts are to hand. Who, one might wonder, is the original of "Francis Speight", the "beaky, grey-haired man" of whom Blacker's hero Gregory Keays remarks "Most of us who had read his work knew that Speight was nowhere near the top order of writers but, over the past three decades or so, the sheer, bullying volume of his output, the persistence with which he appeared at the right conferences, on the right TV discussion programmes, had established him as a sort of literary eminence"? Or the literary journalist "Tony Watson", who "first made his reputation as something of a young Turk, gleefully dismantling work by novelists whose reputation had outlived their talent" before writing a "surprisingly sentimental" account of his Midlands childhood?

Then there's Blacker's droll habit of misappropriating the names of distinguished lady novelists, christening an East End villain turned autobiographer "Brian McWilliam" or a fashionable restaurant "Glaisters". Discretion forbids the printing of a definitive *Who's Who* guide to the novel, but it can be revealed that poor Cheltenham Festival organiser John Walsh was sent a copy by a shameless Weidenfeld publicist drawing his attention to a chapter set at the, er, "Gloucester" literary festival.

'Jasper Milvain'

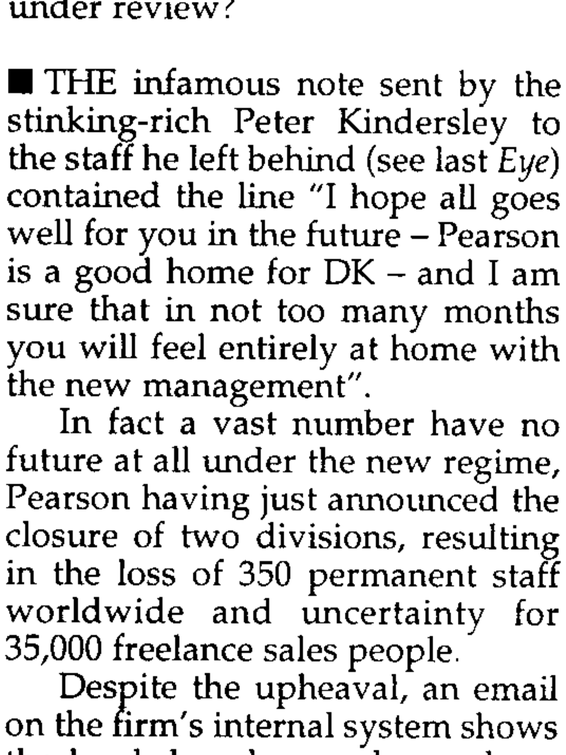

SNIPCOCK & TWEED
HERE'S TO AN INSTITUTION THAT'S DONE SO MUCH TO LIFT US WHEN THINGS LOOKED BLEAK!
QUEEN MUM PAGEANT
QUEEN MOTHER BOOK SALES
GOD BLESS ROYALTIES!
QUEEN MOTHER AT 100
THE QUEEN MUM
100
JAMIE OLIVER QUEEN MUM BOOK

Books & Bookmen

■ IT IS unlikely that the president of the United States pays much attention to the book reviews in London newspapers, but you never know.

This, at least, seems to be the reasoning of the *Grauniad* lawyers who censored a short review of the paperback of Christopher Hitchens' book about Bill Clinton, *No One Left to Lie To*. They forbade reviewer Nicholas Lezard to mention that it includes a new chapter claiming that Clinton raped a woman called Juanita Broaddrick. Even the chapter's title — "Is There a Rapist in the White House?" — was apparently too much for them.

What, one wonders, would the *Grauniad* women's page make of a refusal to "speak out" about a politician credibly accused of rape? And do the paper's legal advisers *really* imagine the Leader of the Free World would unleash Messrs Sue Grabbit and Runne because of an article which merely summarised the case made by a book under review?



"Yes, I'd heard Waterstones were dumbing down"

■ THE infamous note sent by the stinking-rich Peter Kindersley to the staff he left behind (see last *Eye*) contained the line "I hope all goes well for you in the future – Pearson is a good home for DK – and I am sure that in not too many months you will feel entirely at home with the new management".

In fact a vast number have no future at all under the new regime, Pearson having just announced the closure of two divisions, resulting in the loss of 350 permanent staff worldwide and uncertainty for 35,000 freelance sales people.

Despite the upheaval, an email on the firm's internal system shows the hard done-by employees have kept a sense of humour. It contains topically-amended DK book titles, including *Essential Managers: Making Decisions* by James Middlehurst, better known as the MD who ordered the suicidal *Star Wars* print run, and a special edition in the Carol Vorderman *Maths Made Easy* series entitled *Calculating Your Redundancy*.

■ *JOBS may go too at Fourth Estate now that HarperCollins has finally taken it over, but any departures are more likely to be voluntary.*

The company may no longer be independent but the editors are, and it will be interesting to see how long free thinkers like Clive Priddle and Andy Miller (an ex-Waterstonian of the old, argumentative school) can stand working under the Murdoch yoke.

'Bookworm'

IN THE BACK

TURNER'S PRIZE

IN THE dark days of the former Tory government, education ministers were obsessed with wresting control of education from elected councils and handing it over to unelected private companies. This policy is now being pursued with much greater determination and success by Labour.

A good example is in Southwark, south London, whose educational services were subjected to standard criticism by Ofsted last December. The council promptly sacked its education director and, at a cost (in public money) of £138,000, called in KPMG, one of the big five accountancy firms, as education "consultants".

The KPMG report recommended that a private company should be brought in to work with the council, and that two new managers be appointed at public expense: one to take charge of school improvements and one to control policy and resources. The council promptly called in Steve Davis from Havering council to do the first job and Andrew Turner to do the second.

Andrew Turner

Hardly had he been appointed than Steve Davis announced that he had got a new job — with W.S. Atkins, a firm which was bidding for the whole multi-million pound education contract from the council. Rather embarrassed, the council let Mr Davis go, and then, a few days later, on 18 July, proudly announced the name of the company selected to "work with us to develop a top quality education service" — er, W.S. Atkins.

At a meeting with the trade unions, a spokesman for W.S. Atkins confirmed that its total experience in the educational field was running one school bus service and building a school extension under a PFI scheme. The firm explained that it would be relying for education experience on its consortium partner named in a council document as Education Management Services.

Whoops! Checks by John Mulrenan of Unison revealed that Education Management Services ceased trading in April last year. When Unison pointed this out, the council confessed rather sheepishly that it had made a mistake. The relevant consortium partner was, in fact, Educational Management Services. Even with the vital "al" added on, this company's accounts are not over-burdened with abundance.

Accounts dated 31 July last year, and prepared under special provisions for small companies, show a loss on "total assets less current liabilities" of £49,210, tangible assets of £22,515 and net investments of £3,000. The *Eye* put these figures to Southwark council and asked if this was the company it really wanted to run its educational services.

The council's reply did not apply itself directly to the question. "We have," a spokesman explained, "carried out an exhaustive evaluation programme of W.S. Atkins' bid. We are satisfied they can provide a top quality service for the young people of Southwark."

What about Andrew Turner? *Eye* readers may recall his role in Choice, a Tory party front organisation whose sole purpose was to campaign for schools to "opt out" of local authority control. Turner and Choice shared offices with an organisation called the Grant Maintained School Centre. The centre got £750,000 a year from the Tory government to provide information and services about opted-out schools.

In a rash moment Kenneth Baker, the Tories' former education secretary, had promised that "not a penny" of government money would be used to persuade schools to opt out of state control. So a bright young Labour MP called Stephen Byers started to ask questions about the public money for the Grant Maintained Schools Centre and the private propaganda organisation, Choice. He also asked about the salary of Andrew Turner of Choice. Who was paying it and how much? He never got a proper answer, but in a suppressed report exposed in the *Eye*, a department of education accounting officer, Mr P.F Slade, revealed that the accounts of the two organisations were so mixed up it was impossible to separate them. A national audit office report, endorsed by the Commons public accounts committee, "pointed to the risk that grant money (from the government) might have financed non-eligible functions" (propaganda for opting out).

Stung by all this, the Tory government changed the name of the Grant Maintained Schools Centre to Grant Maintained Schools Foundation and withdrew from the centre the grant of public money. This device prompted the jubilant Stephen Byers MP to jeer at what he called the "Sellafield Syndrome". "When something goes wrong," he said, "you change the name and carry on as before" (see *Eye* 842).

Mr Byers is now secretary of state for trade and industry in the Labour government (and a prominent member of Labour's rather defunct socialist education association). The Sellafield Syndrome seems still to be prevalent in education, where the name of the government has changed but the old Tory opt-out policy continues apace. Andrew Turner, Tory candidate for the Isle of Wight at the last election, and still fanatically dedicated to wresting education from council control, is now the official in charge of policy and resources for education in the Labour-controlled borough of Southwark.

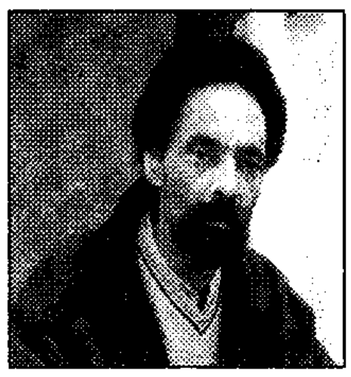
Southwark council won't say how much public money Mr Turner is being paid, but he can't be getting much less than the £575 a day the council are paying Mr Tony Morgan, recently brought in "on a consultancy basis" to run Southwark's personnel department.

KAY'S CATALOGUE

THE government has come up with a startling answer to a question about perhaps the most disgraceful negligence in the crown prosecution service (CPS) ever recorded: "We haven't a clue why it happened."

The answer came from attorney general Lord Williams in a letter to Mark Fisher, Labour MP for Stoke Central. As reported in recent *Eyes*, Mr Fisher has been trying to find out how 201 statements which blew a hole in the prosecution case against Johnny Kamara came to be "mislaid". The mysterious "losing" of these statements led directly to Mr Kamara's 1981 conviction for the murder of John Suffield in Liverpool.

Mr Kamara's conviction was quashed earlier this year after the 201 statements about his case were sent to the criminal cases review commission. The statements were made before the murder trial, and they make nonsense of the (already very thin) prosecution case. At the



John Kamara

time, the statements were seen by the junior prosecution barrister at the trial — Mr John Kay — now a senior high court judge.

Mr Kay recommended in writing that the documents should be disclosed to the defence but they were not. Indeed for nearly 20 years they were kept secret. Even the appeal court judges were shocked at such a clear case of non-disclosure of vital evidence. But they ordered no inquiry.

In May Mark Fisher, who first raised the Kamara case with the authorities in 1994, wrote to the home secretary and the lord chancellor asking for an explanation. Two months later, on 17 July, he had a brief reply from Lord Williams. "The crown prosecution service has investigated the matter to ascertain why these documents were not disclosed to the defence at the time of the proceedings in 1981. Unfortunately the passage of time has made it impossible to find out what occurred and the reasons, if any, why the documents were not disclosed. I am sorry that I am unable to assist further in connection with your inquiry."

This is blatant cover-up and obfuscation. All sorts of questions remain. Who was in charge of the papers at the time and will he or she be named? Why was Mr Kay's recommendation ignored? (Sir John Kay might be able to help.) Was there any correspondence about the documents, and if so will it be published? Surely someone in the CPS was responsible for such an appalling non-disclosure and the miscarriage of justice which it caused? The *Eye* will be putting these (and other) questions to the attorney general's office, Sir John Kay and others.

RAW DEAL

THE two Cambridge charity workers Ruth Wyner and John Brock have at last been released from prison pending appeal against their conviction and bizarrely long jail sentences (*Eye* 995) for permitting their homeless hostel to be used for drug dealing.

The case worried everyone responsible for caring for the vulnerable: there was no suggestion the pair were ever complicit in dealing, merely that they had not prevented it. They received five and four years in jail respectively — longer than the dealers.

Winning the go-ahead to challenge the conviction, Michael Mansfield, the pair's QC, successfully argued that trial judge Jonathan Howarth had misdirected the jury over whether — in the light of the hostel's police-approved drugs policy — the two charity workers had taken all reasonable steps to prevent dealing. At the heart of the case was the charity's policy of confidentiality, which prevented them from handing to police the names of anyone suspected of dealing.

At the appeal proper in October that argument may win justice for the pair, now reunited with their families after seven months in jail. But it won't prevent the same thing happening again to other hapless drugs or charity workers. Only reform of section eight of the misuse of drugs act, under which Wyner and Brock were charged, can prevent another similar miscarriage of justice.

The potential for "serious injustice" under section eight was recognised in Lady Runciman's report on drug law reform, *Drugs and the Law*, which was published earlier this year. It said: "People in charge of certain premises, particularly those used for education or the care of the homeless, sick or otherwise vulnerable, may face severe penalties for failing to prevent activities over which they have very limited control. There is also potential conflict between the duty to the people in their care and the demands of the law."

The report recommended section eight be redrafted in a way that would have protected the likes of Wyner and Brock. But prime minister Tony Blair and home secretary Jack Straw, preferring to pander to populist focus groups, have already run away from most of the report's sensible recommendations.

THOR POINT

THOR Holdings, the UK company at the centre of one of South Africa's nastiest poisoning scandals, has been accused of embarking on a clever restructuring exercise to avoid paying compensation to ill or injured workers.

Thor used to run a mercury reprocessing plant in Margate, Kent. But 13 years ago, after continual criticism from the UK's Health & Safety Executive (HSE), it exported its practices lock, stock and loaded barrel to unsuspecting Cato Ridge in Natal — with fatal results.

After two South African workers, Peter Cele and Englebert Ngcobo, collapsed and later died from mercury poisoning (which affects the brain and nervous system), Thor's executives were prosecuted. They were acquitted of culpable homicide but found guilty of negligence.

Three years ago the company paid £1.3m to the dead men's families and 18 other workers to settle civil damages claims for mercury poisoning. At around the same time a South African commission of inquiry slammed Thor for importing thousands of tons of waste mercury, even though there was no way it could all be processed. Thor displayed a "disturbingly careless attitude to the environment", said the report, after the toxic material bled into rivers near Thor's plant.

In three months' time in the high court in London, Thor faces another claim from 20 more workers who say the company failed to protect them from the potentially lethal effects of mercury. Armed with expert reports and the company's much-condemned track record, they were reasonably confident of success. But it has emerged that Thor's assets have been significantly diluted. Leigh, Day and Co, the workers' London solicitors, allege that Thor has transferred its assets to a newly-formed holding company, called Tato holdings, simply to avoid justice.

The effect of the disposal of assets is that Thor's turnover has dropped from £20.5m in 1997 to less than £2m — not enough to meet its liabilities if it loses the court action.

Last year's Tato accounts describe a trust, Eurotrust, as the ultimate controlling party. Eurotrust had been the ultimate controlling party of Thor Holdings. And although Des Cowley, Thor's chairman, is not a beneficiary, his children are.

Thor and Cowley have dismissed Leigh Day's claims, although they admit the shake-up is directly related to the first civil action in 1997. In a lengthy statement, they said the settlement to workers was not an admission of liability but the best way of saving Thor's assets. To have fought the case would have cost more in legal fees — even if Thor had won.

This time, however, they were committed to "defending vigorously" the civil action. "Because of this we are forced to dispose of assets to fund the defence costs. Otherwise we are vulnerable to any numbers of future actions — no matter how spurious or unfounded. Unless we make a stand, we face the prospect of more and more claims which will drain us completely," the company said.

The high court has been asked to consider whether or not Thor's actions are lawful. In the meantime Cowley has announced that what is left of Thor Holdings will now be called Guernica Chemicals plc after the town that came under ferocious attack from the fascist forces in the Spanish civil war.

Said Cowley: "It seemed appropriate in view of the fascist nature of the attacks on Thor. The name has become synonymous with war at its worst but 63 years later Guernica still survives." Unfortunately some of Thor's poisoned victims have not.

Hear no evil, SEAC no evil

FOR the last 18 months the *Eye* has been drawing attention to a substantial body of expert opinion linking possible human contamination by BSE to vaccines.

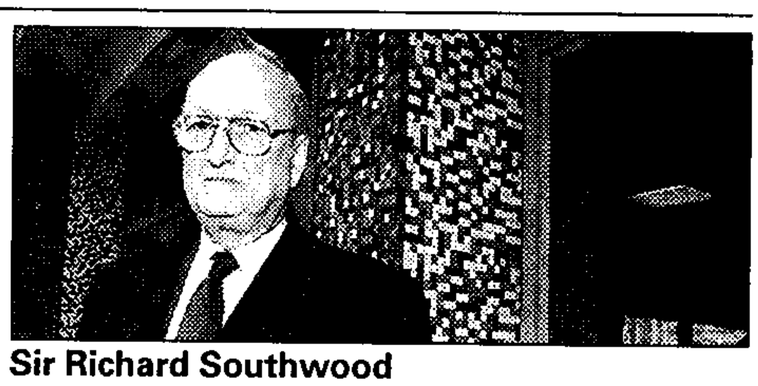
In particular we noted the views of the four members of the Southwood inquiry which first led to the banning of meat from infected cattle. These four experts gave evidence to the Phillips inquiry on BSE last July. All four agreed with Sir Richard Southwood, who confirmed his view that the "degree of hazard from medicinal products was greater than the degree of hazard from eating infected meat".

Sir Richard went on: "We were very conscious all the way through of the worry about the vaccination programme. And these were very real deaths. One hundred and seventy deaths had been estimated by the chief medical officer." This was not specially surprising since the Southwood report of 1989 had concluded: "The greater risk, in theory, would be from parenteral injection of material derived from bovine brain or lymphoid tissues".

Dr Jeremy Metters, deputy chief medical officer at the department of health, told the inquiry in July 1998: "I think it came as quite a surprise just how many medicinal products had materials of bovine origin in them." And as early as October 1990 Professor Gerald Collee of the BSE Working Group reported: "It seems unreasonable to allow vaccines that have some association with UK-sourced bovine products to be used."

Under a volley of questions from Norman Baker, Liberal Democrat MP for Lewes, the department of health now admits that vaccines made with bovine material went on being used after 1989, when BSE was first exposed. They were used at least until 1992 when all the vaccine manufacturers finally switched to herds free from BSE.

In spite of this volume of expert evidence, SEAC, the government committee which investigates BSE-related diseases in humans, seems always to assume that the disease must be linked to food. On 16 July, the *Independent on Sunday* led with a story entitled SCHOOL MEALS LINKED TO CJD DEATHS. The



Sir Richard Southwood

story quoted Prof Robert Will, of the government's Edinburgh-based CJD surveillance unit, which works very closely with SEAC. Prof Will observed that "one of the greatest mysteries" of the disease is that it "disproportionately hits young people".

Prof Will and colleagues conclude from this that the source of the disease must be foods eaten by young people. Baby food or mechanically recovered meat were his chief suspects, and his worries, for which he admitted he had no proof, were duly plastered all over the media.

None of these media saw fit even to mention any possible danger from vaccines, even though the mass vaccination programme from 1989 to 1992 (when infected bovine material could well have been used) was limited by definition to very young people.

FACT TO REMEMBER: Pharmaceutical companies are well represented in the commercial interests of members of SEAC. Pharmaceutical companies in which SEAC members declare an interest include Smithkline Beecham Pharmaceuticals; Boehringer Ingelheim; Abbott Laboratories; Abbott Pharmaceuticals; Merck and Pfizer.

BRADFORD & BULLSHIT

"A bank has to put profits first. A building society is run solely for members, putting **your** interests first. We firmly believe that it is in your interests to vote to keep Bradford & Bingley a building society. "

— Letter to members from the Bradford & Bingley Building Society, March 1999.

The board's position is clear. Our unanimous recommendation is that you vote for conversion.

— Letter to members from the Bradford & Bingley Building Society, June 2000.

Whitewash?

LAST MONTH's home office report into the 11th-hour collapse of what was to be a showcase international conference organised by the Commission for Racial Equality raises more questions than it answers. Not least how much taxpayers' money was spent on the doomed venture and whether it was operating legally.

The Global Cultural Diversity Congress (GCDC), endorsed by Tony Blair, the United Nations and others, was due to take place in Cardiff last March with grand luminaries supposed to be speaking including Nelson Mandela himself. But with less than a month to go GCDC 2000, the limited company set up by the CRE, went into voluntary liquidation owing hundreds of thousands of pounds and the event folded.

Home secretary Jack Straw ordered an inquiry by Gurbux Singh, the CRE's incoming chair. Not surprisingly perhaps, given that Singh was reporting on people who were about to become his colleagues, his 11-page report discovered serious failings in financial and management controls but "no single individual or event" to blame.

The trigger for pulling the plug was an unpublished report from independent assessors, The Risk Advisory Group, called in by home office mandarins worried about the congress's viability. The report said it would cost £1.5m to save the congress or £1m to cancel it, and it also raised serious questions about whether GCDC 2000 was keeping proper records and trading while insolvent — both criminal offences under company law.

Though the home office took flight, refused further funding and saw GCDC 2000 go into liquidation, the CRE, which had already given substantial funds, actually coughed up a further £163,000 of taxpayers' money.

The Singh report merely notes that the CRE had not been receiving up to date or complete information for several months, and that the process for approving further funding was "not as independent as it could have been". An understatement. GCDC 2000's board was stuffed with CRE people, including Susie Parsons, the CRE chief executive and accounting officer, plus two commissioners and two CRE staff members.

Of this obvious conflict of interest, Mr Singh says lamely: "Whether a board member of GCDC 2000, committed to the success of the congress, could consider requests for CRE funding as objectively as would otherwise be the case is open to question."

The report makes no mention of another government department — the Central Office of Information – which is listed as GCDC's biggest creditor, owed some £238,817. Nor does it answer other questions raised about whether GCDC was set up legally and in accordance with the government's own financial guidelines.

City liquidators Robson Rhodes last week confirmed that they were examining whether GCDC had been trading while insolvent and breaching company law and are appealing to creditors for information. Whitehall insiders suggest the independent assessors' estimates of £1m losses are not far out.

Full of IT

SIX years and many millions of pounds after the probation union Napo first warned that the "revolutionary" case record management system (CRAMS) wasn't worth the computer programme it was written on (see *Eyes passim*), the home office finally looks set to shut it down.

The department's probation unit is to recommend that the much-derided CRAMS (which couldn't even keep track of criminals' aliases) be replaced by a new system, the "Data Migration Project" (DMP).

DMP is not without teething problems, however. It keeps crashing; and before implementation can be formally approved, the unit admits it has to overcome "technical performance problems". It also has to ensure that Bull Information Systems, which holds the lucrative IT probation contract, will be prepared to accept liability. Probation officers are not holding their breath.

In the City

THE relentless pursuit of fraud is one of the mantras regularly issued by the now Brussels-based Welsh Windbag Neil Kinnock as part of the European commission's new look. But, as ever, words have proved much easier than actions. There is still little or no evidence of those responsible for Euro-fraud, especially within the commission itself, being successfully prosecuted.

Several glaring frauds involving corrupt Eurocrats have been exposed in the past five years. But to date none of those identified has been punished through the courts. Often they have been allowed to take early retirement or simply transferred. Only 13 of the 80 officials to face disciplinary action have ever been dismissed.

One official identified in a recent aid project scandal as failing to stop a blatant fraud within his department has been "punished" by being given an ambassadorial post!

Even those against whom criminal proceedings have begun, such as over the near £1m stolen in fraudulent tourism projects during 1990, are still awaiting trial four years after the commission began its investigation.

This may in part be the fault of the judicial process in Belgium and France where proceedings have been brought. But it is also the case that the commission shows little enthusiasm to rush for judgment where its own officials are concerned.

Internal investigations by the commission's own freshly-minted fraudbusters OLAF (successor to UCLAF – We all laugh) are handicapped by being subject to the commission's internal politics.

Now it seems that the investigation into how home office favourite Group 4 Securitas was awarded a £50m contract in 1992 to provide security staff to the commission may be heading down the same dead end road. The word in Brussels is that the criminal investigation is unlikely to result in any prosecutions. Meanwhile a verdict is still awaited on whether eight Eurocrats, whose legal immunity was waived, will face any disciplinary action. Disciplinary proceedings were initiated against four officials in 1998.

The investigation began in 1997 after it was claimed that Group 4 had not been the initial lowest bidder; that it had submitted a revised and reduced bid after sealed tenders had been submitted; and that the terms of the contract had later been altered to compensate for the reduced bid.

Linked to this outcome were allegations that the contract included the provision of "ghost" workers among the 600 Group 4 guards provided whose real roles were to carry out private duties such as chauffeurs, gardeners, hairdressers and care workers for senior commission officials including, it was alleged, former president Jacques Delors. Some 30 "ghosts" were identified as being on the books as guards but providing other services for which Group 4 was paid by the commission.

The result of a UCLAF investigation was passed to the prosecutors in Brussels two years ago. Group 4 carried out its own internal investigation as a result of which its chief executive in Belgium was sacked. The commission transferred or allowed to retire several officials in its Bureau de Securité (BdS) which negotiated the contract with Group 4.

The internal and criminal investigations appear to have concentrated on whether the sealed bids were accessed in a safe prior to the official tender opening in order for Group 4 to revise its bid downwards. However, that seems to have been a "red herring". The fix went in after the tenders were opened and Group 4 was "invited" to put in a revised bid on the basis that it was the preferred winner.

The reason it was the favoured bidder, it has now emerged, was that it knew all about the live "ghosts": Group 4 had previously shared the contract with a local company and was prepared to continue providing their services as required by the BdS hierarchy. The "ghosts" had been cruising the corridors of Brussels power since the 80s.

All of which came as a complete surprise to everyone outside the tight little circle in Brussels within the BdS and the local Group 4 subsidiary. A reason perhaps the security guard contract – which Group 4 lost in 1997 – has now been handed back to the home office favourites on the grounds that they are still the most capable supplier of security guards even without the "ghosts"!

IT APPEARS nerves are starting to fray inside Redmayne Bentley, brokers to the *Mirror*'s City Slickers Anil Bhoyrul and James Hipwell.

A meeting was recently convened at the firm's Leeds headquarters at which it was suggested heads may have to roll. This presumably means in the all important London office. The theory appears to be that it is perhaps better to carry out any necessary executions ahead of any that may be required by the Department of Timidity & Inaction or the Financial Services Authority.

The mood of the Redmayne meeting suggests bad things are anticipated for its former clients Bhoyrul and Hipwell even if *Mirror* editor Piers Morgan, who dealt through Kyte Securities, escapes criminal retribution.

The key to Morgan's fate with the DTI is expected to lie with the content of the tapes of his dealing instructions to Antony Laiker at Kyte. But some suggest these are at best ambiguous – funny that! Also, would it be possible to bring a case against "Moron" without giving immunity to one or other of the Slickers? And could that be justified – absent a guilty plea – given their serial pocket-lining market manipulation?

But while the Slickers may be firmly rooted in the investigatory forest, it does not mean that their old pal Piers is yet out of the woods.

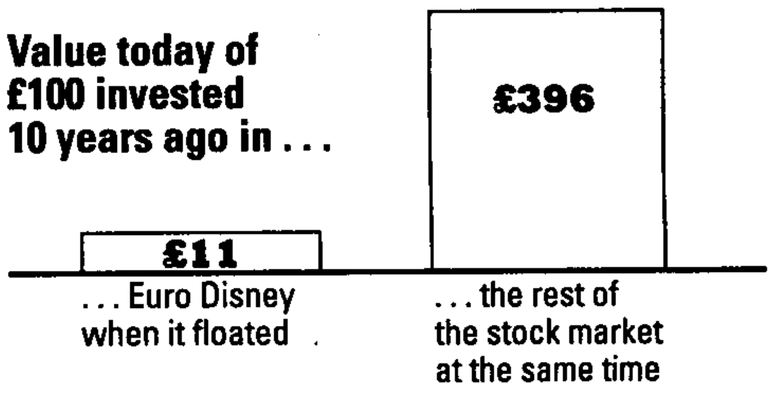
"CAPITAL Punishment" was the title of an amateur boxing tournament two weeks ago pitting City traders against their Wall Street rivals in a "bash-for-cash" fund raiser for a cancer charity. The promoter of this unusual event was a certain Alan Lacey.

Presumably this was not the Alan Lacey who promoted the "Boxmania" show in Brixton in 1993 and fled before the night was out leaving several boxers unpaid. He later reappeared claiming to have been taken ill and that all would be paid. That Alan Lacey had some curious business partners.

Up front was convicted criminal Ambrose Mendy, whose role was to provide the boxers despite being unlicensed (and unlicensable) even by the British Boxing Board of No Control. Mendy has served another prison sentence for fraud since that night's fiasco.

Stock Horror

Euro Disney takes the Mickey



Unseen were the Adams brothers, leaders of one of London's top organised crime groups. The Brothers Grim were said to have been backing Lacey and Mendy, with whom they had enjoyed previous and subsequent business connections. Meetings to discuss "Boxmania" took place in the brothers' Camden restaurant. All of which may explain why that Alan Lacey became very ill when he saw no chance of making money on the Brixton promotion.

No doubt this is all just a remarkable coincidence.

A NUMBER of City readers have written to defend the merits of the medium term note (MTN) market as played by leading banks and institutions from its hijacking as a cover for fraud by Roddam Twiss and other peddlers of the sovereign nation infrastructure private sector (Snips) funding scam detailed in the last issue.

Yes, there is an MTN market which forms part of derivatives trading. But this is not what Snips is all about. Twiss and others purport to be playing in a similarly named but non-existent version of that market. All the best cons adapt rather than invent. The trick is to spot the join. Such as by obtaining evidence of successful trading from named banks or brokers. That's when it all falls apart.

WHAT a surprise! David Rowland and his offshore family interests are cashing in at internet incubator Jellyworks. They now stand to collect some £45m in slightly more realisable Shore Capital shares courtesy of a takeover by the broker in which Rowland is already an investor. Monaco-based "Spotty" always liked incestuous deals. The best surprise is no surprise – other than for other shareholders.

"Spotty" has not lost his touch over the past 30 years. Takeover a company by paying pennies or injecting assets. Ramp the shares in a limited market. Suck in the mugs first on private placings then through the market. Look for the exit applying the Greater Fool Theory of Investment.

Jellyworks was all this and more. Which is why there was a wealth warning in *Eye* 994, weeks before the dot.com bubble burst. After approaching £300m the company is valued at £62m on the Shore bid. Now wait for Rowland to start unloading the family's 20 percent of Shore – much easier than the 70 percent of Jellyworks.

'Slicker'

THE DIRECTORS

DREDGE/RIGG

DID YOU KNOW, OLD BOY, THAT I CAN PULL DOWN VITAL BUSINESS INFORMATION ONTO MY STATE-OF-THE-ART WAP PHONE..?
BEEP! BIP! BEEP!
...THUS PROVIDING THAT CRUCIAL EDGE OVER THE COMPETITION...
...THE 1ST IS A 300YD DOG-LEG WITH ROUGH TO THE LEFT OF THE GREEN...
70.

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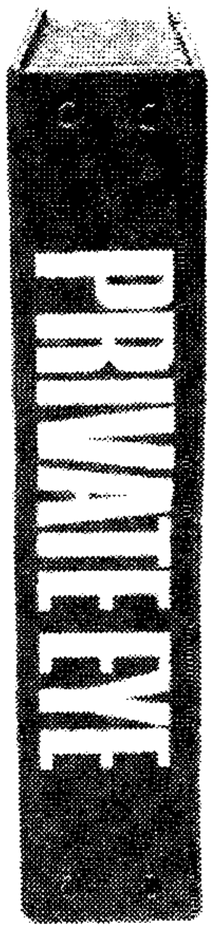

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TALL, CULTURED, successful and very generous man, 40, Bath/South West, seeks a younger woman to spoil and pamper and to enjoy the summer with. I live life to the full – film, theatre, travel, eating out and eating in, laughter and the rich tapestry of life. If you would like a fun relationship with a man who really enjoys himself then please write to me with your telephone number to Box 2805.

HANDSOME (TOLD), 36, tall, successful male with great sense of humour and fun – seeks discreet liaison with attached or career lady. Let's put a bit of spark into life. Total discretion assured. S.W. London. gla99@dial.pipex.com or Box 2405.

HANDSOME, masterful, romantic entrepreneur M/41, desiring younger svelte erotically unassertive F/partner. 07050 398943.

NORMAL MAN, 52, seeks normal woman for normal reasons – big hugs and surprises. Box 2407.

HANDSOME, TALL, slim professional male, 49, wealthy, well-endowed and single, seeks sexual relationship with 20-something sexy lady. West London. Photo essential. Box 1107.

INDEPENDENT, ATTRACTIVE slim, fit, feminine lady in 40s WLTM n/s honest, unattached, with GSOH, male, 30-45. West Sussex. Box 1307.

STRIKING SLIM blonde female (40s), London-based, likes conversation, music, films, art and more – seeks unattached, fit, intelligent man (45-55) with style and imagination for fun and friendship. Photo please. Box 2307.

MARRIED, ATTRACTIVE, slim female, 42, has class and style, enjoys laughter and the good things in life – seeks male 43-55 for discreet relationship. London / Warwickshire. No beards, no plebs. Box 3607.

AMIABLE MALE, fifties, occasionally assertive, many interests including countryside, sea, music (classical and pop), Frasier on TV, wine, good food and conversation, WLTM intelligent, pleasant, unassertive female for discreet relationship. Photo appreciated. London/Essex. Box 0807.

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YOU'RE MALE, 40-55, urbane, bright and living in/around Bristol. I'm 39, female, attractive, with a similar profile to yours. Box 0907.

MALE/45, FIT, STRONG confident, G.S.O.H. Likes wine, eating out, arts – seeks female, age unimportant, for discreet quality relationship and erotic liaisons. Box 0607.

AFFECTIONATE, SUCCESSFUL, attractive professional man, 43 (attached), WLTM younger married/unmarried lady with GSOH for passionate daytime encounters. Discretion assured and expected. London. Box 3707.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE BASED Knight, 44, slim good looking, intelligent, seeks sensual liaison with neglected lady. Have steed, can travel. Key to chastity belt appreciated. Box 0407.

SOMETHING DIFFERENT? Tall, dark, handsome, understanding male, 40s – seeks woman with special interests or secret desires. Box 2607.

ASSERTIVE LONDON man, youthful 44, nice guy, accomplished beyond measure, seeks full-bosomed girl for meeting of minds. Box 2807.

CAMBRIDGE EDUCATED professional male, 55, seeks attractive, intelligent cultured lady. London/ S.E. England. Box 2907.

LOVELY, REFINED libran lady early 40's seeks kind, successful, unattached gentleman for special times. Box 3007.

YOUNG BLOKE seeks older woman. Mid 30's but looks younger, fit successful but has a thing about older women. Looking for discreet relationship with someone in their 50's or 60's. East Anglia preferred. Box 4107.

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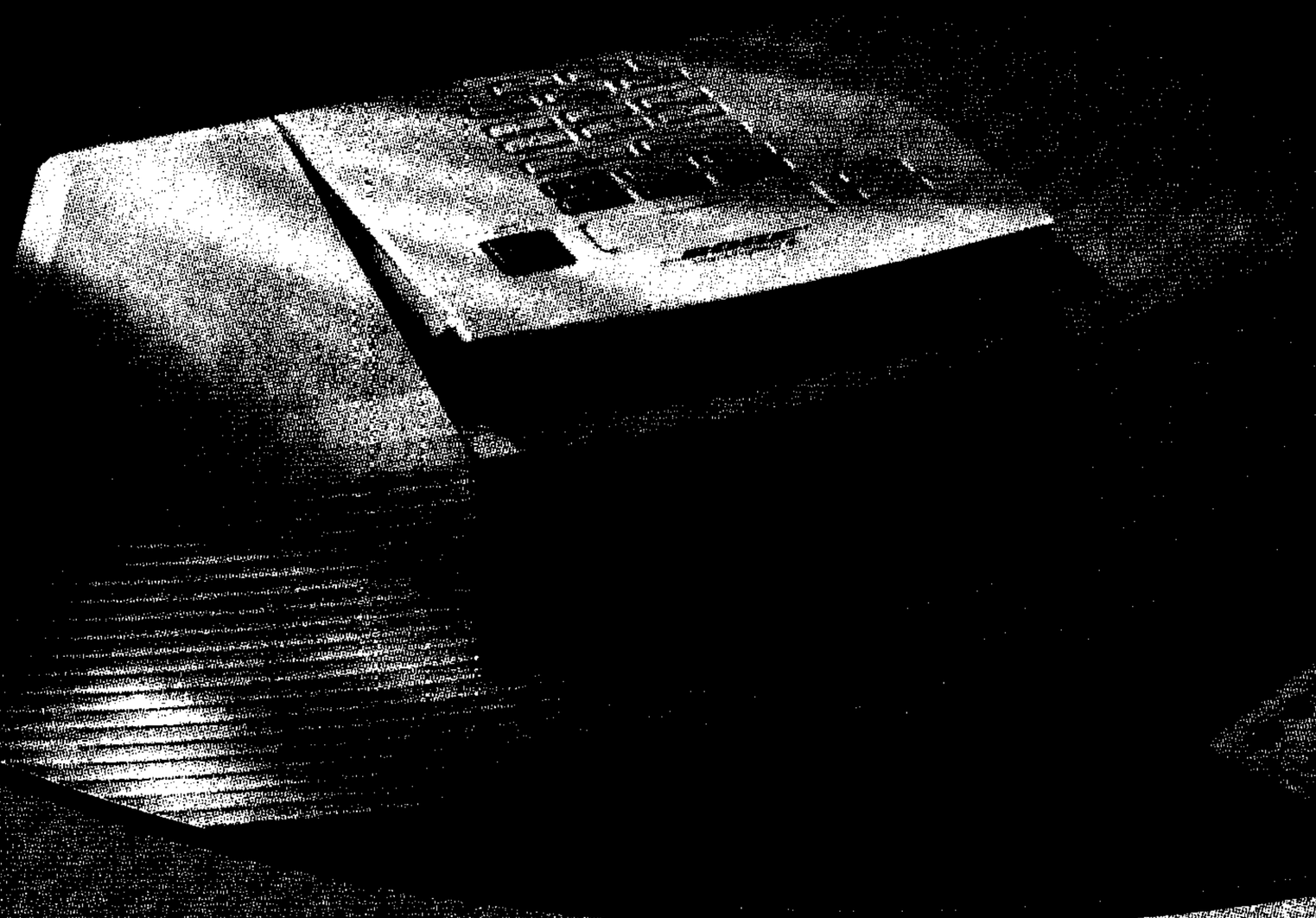

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